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ABSTRACT

Alberta Learning expects all schools to have a safe and caring teaching and learning environment to ensure students have the opportunity to meet the standards of education set by the Minister of Learning. The primary objectives of this manual are to facilitate action that is legally, professionally, and educationally sound; identify and support preventive strategies that promote a safe, secure, and caring school environment; provide information about developing effective policies and procedures at the system and school levels; provide guidance in crisis communications; and assist with appropriate followup. Sufficient practical information is provided to facilitate effective planning and decisive action, which is supported by legislation and policy. Seven sections include: (1) "Governance--Legislation"; (2) "Governance--Policy Development"; (3) "Violence Prevention"; (4) "Intervention--Crisis Response and Follow-Up"; (5) "Communications and Follow-Up Reports"; (6) "Support Organizations and Agencies"; and (7) "Staff Development and Teaching Resources." This manual can serve as a practical guide to school staff as they address issues of safety and security in their schools. Appendices include forms, such as the Safe and Caring School Scan, crisis-response forms, and crisis-report forms. (Contains 108 references.) (RT)

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Supporting Safe, Secure and Caring Schools in Alberta

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Message from the
Minister of Learning

The Safe and Caring Schools initiative is a government priority that encourages and assists members of the school community in developing the knowledge, skills and supports needed to ensure that all Alberta schools are safe and caring. Our commitment to ensure safe and caring schools is reflected in the Government of Alberta's 3 Year Plan for Education and the Alberta Children's Initiative.

I believe violence in any form harms the educational progress and personal development of students and that violence prevention ultimately supports higher student achievement. The key to making our schools safe lies in shared responsibility through collaborative partnerships — we must provide a foundation of positive standards and values that maintains the sense of safety, security and caring in our schools.

I am pleased to release *Supporting Safe, Secure and Caring Schools in Alberta* which provides administrators and educators with a comprehensive framework to deal with and prevent violence in schools. Through the well-informed efforts outlined in this resource, schools will remain safe and caring communities.

Dr. Lyle Oberg
Minister of Learning

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Dean McMullen, principal writer

Members of the Safe and Caring Schools Provincial Advisory Committee representing:

Alberta Alcohol and Drug Abuse Commission
Alberta Association of School Resource Officers
Alberta Children's Services (including the Office for the Prevention of Family Violence)
Alberta Community Development
Alberta Health and Wellness
Alberta Human Resources and Employment
Alberta Infrastructure
Alberta Justice and Attorney General
Alberta Municipal Affairs
Alberta Provincial Mental Health Board
Alberta School Boards Association
Alberta Teachers' Association
Calgary Police Services
College of Alberta School Superintendents
Council of School Administrators of The Alberta Teachers' Association
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Introduction

Alberta Learning expects all schools to have a safe and caring teaching and learning environment to ensure students have the opportunity to meet the standards of education set by the Minister of Learning. The primary objectives of this manual are to:

- facilitate action which is legally, professionally and educationally sound
- identify and support preventive strategies which promote a safe, secure and caring school environment
- provide information about developing effective policies and procedures at the system and school levels
- provide strategies for dealing effectively with crisis situations should they occur
- provide guidance in crisis communications
- assist with appropriate follow-up.

The information included in this resource manual will help all schools, working in collaboration with parents and community members, plan and implement effective policies and programs for safe and caring schools.

An education system that helps young people become self-reliant, responsible, caring and contributing members of society is the mandate of Alberta Learning.

The Government of Alberta has developed a plan for the province's education system which:

- gives all Alberta students access to quality programs
- helps them achieve high standards
- prepares them for work, further study and citizenship.[1]

---

[1] From *The Government of Alberta's 3 year plan for education 1999/2000 to 2001/2002* (p. 3), by Alberta Education, 1999, Edmonton, AB: Alberta Education.

One broad goal of government states, "Alberta's children are well cared-for, safe, successful at learning, and healthy."[2] This resource manual supports this goal and the result identified in Alberta Learning's plan that, "schools provide a safe and caring environment for students." The department strategy is to, "assist school authorities and other partners to develop school and community resources and to implement initiatives to promote safe and caring schools." This will be measured by the percentage of parents, students and the public who are satisfied that schools provide a safe and caring environment.[3]

In 1993 and 1994, two forums on student conduct and violence in schools were hosted by the Minister of Education. Participants recommended collaborative ongoing action by education partners to improve student conduct and reduce violence in schools.

In 1996, the Minister of Education assumed the leadership role and announced the Safe and Caring Schools initiative (SACS). This initiative provides a collaborative and integrated approach to dealing with this important societal issue. Safe and Caring Schools consists of a number of projects, involving all education partners in:

- developing and implementing prevention materials and resources to support teaching and learning
- identifying the nature and extent of violence in Alberta schools
- examining issues about governance related to promoting safe and caring schools in Alberta.

The mission of the Safe and Caring Schools initiative is to encourage and assist members of the school community in developing the knowledge, skills and supports needed to ensure that Alberta schools are safe and caring.

The goals of the Safe and Caring Schools initiative are to:

- identify and promote effective practices, programs and policies to prevent, respond to and correct any behaviour that is disruptive to teaching and learning
- ensure all schools are safe and caring.

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[2] From *The Alberta children's initiative: an agenda for joint action* (p. 5), by the Government of Alberta, 1998, Edmonton, AB: the Government of Alberta.

[3] From *The Government of Alberta's 3 year plan for education 1999/2000 to 2001/2002* (p. 14) by Alberta Education, 1999, Edmonton, AB: Alberta Education.

The guiding principles of the SACS initiative, and subsequent projects developed as a result, are to:

- promote the best educational interests of students
- promote safe and caring schools and communities by using a multi-disciplinary approach
- develop strategies and programs for prevention, intervention, response and continuous evaluation
- have schools play a leadership role because of their tremendous potential to positively influence the lives of young people
- promote the development of responsible, caring and respectful members of a democratic society
- combine the efforts of government, school boards, schools, students, parents and community members to ensure all Alberta schools are safe and caring as they strive toward academic excellence
- provide opportunities for active participation by all partners to ensure schools and communities are safe and caring.

Sufficient practical information is provided to facilitate effective planning and decisive action, which is supported by legislation and policy. This manual will serve as a practical guide to school staff as they address the important issue of safety and security in their schools.

The information will assist school staff members in their efforts to ensure that everyone in school is provided with a safe, secure and caring learning and teaching environment which fosters respectful and responsible behaviour.

Definitions

SAFE AND CARING SCHOOLS

A *Safe and Caring School* is:

- physically, emotionally and psychologically safe as characterized by:
  - caring
  - common values and beliefs
  - respect for democratic values, rights and responsibilities
  - respect for cultural diversity
  - respect for law and order
  - common social expectations
  - clear and consistent behavioural expectations
  - appropriate and positive role modeling by staff and students

- respect for individual differences
- effective anger-management strategies
- community, family, student and staff involvement.[4]

A safe and caring school is an environment wherein all are accorded respect and dignity, and their safety and well-being are paramount considerations.

VIOLENCE

The term "violence" has many different meanings and connotations. To foster congruence, the project leaders for the SACS initiative have adopted the following definition.

> Violence is the actual or threatened use of physical, verbal, sexual or emotional power; intimidation or harassment, by or against individuals or groups, which results in physical and/or psychological harm, or is harmful to the social well-being of an individual or group.[5]

This broad definition of violence includes the subtle behaviours which can be just as destructive, damaging and hurtful as the more blatant, physically overt behaviours commonly referred to as "violent." A safe, secure and caring school is one which strives to establish and maintain an environment free from all these behaviours.

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[4] From *A Safe place: creating peaceful schools* (p. 16), by the Alberta School Boards Association, 1994, Edmonton, AB: Alberta School Boards Association. Reprinted with permission.

[5] From *School violence: administrative leadership in decision making* (p. 21), by I. MacDonald, 1998. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Alberta, Edmonton, AB, Canada. Reprinted with permission.

ROOT CAUSES OF VIOLENCE

Seven Root Causes of Violence

- *Wealth without work*
- *Pleasure without conscience*
- *Knowledge without character*
- *Commerce without morality*
- *Science without humanity*
- *Worship without sacrifice*
- *Politics without principles*

Mahatma Gandhi

Violence comes in many forms and may be a symptom of other problems, such as:[6]

- family violence and/or childhood traumas (physical and sexual abuse)
- abuse of alcohol, drugs and other substances
- racism, sexism and other forms of discrimination
- poverty
- lack of self-esteem
- absence of healthy human bonding
- inconsistent and/or excessive discipline practices
- media violence
- academic failure
- abnormal neurological functioning.

Overview

Although there is great diversity among schools in Alberta, certain legal requirements apply to all situations. The *School Act, Child Welfare Act, Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms,* and *The Alberta Teachers' Association Code of Professional Conduct* for instance, apply equally to every public school. Community support services and agencies, on the other hand, vary greatly throughout the province. The information provided in this manual is directed to all public, separate and charter schools and will be of benefit to private school staff. Staff members will need to adapt the material to fit the unique circumstances of their schools, and be flexible and responsive to their local communities and student populations.

This resource is divided into sections that individually provide information and direction on each particular topic, and together present a comprehensive guide to the development of policies and procedures to provide guidance during crisis situations.

Because each situation is unique, legal advice specific to a particular set of circumstances can be obtained from member services of The Alberta Teachers' Association, from legal services of the Alberta School Boards Association and/or from the legal services available through local school boards. The information in this manual is not intended to be a substitute for sound legal advice specific to a particular situation or local issue.

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[6] Adapted from *National crime prevention council, prevention and children committee: a compendium of approaches from across Canada* (p. 2), by the National Crime Prevention Council, 1996, Ottawa, ON: National Crime Prevention Council. Adapted with permission. The National Crime Prevention Council has been replaced by the National Crime Prevention Centre [http://www.crime-prevention.org].

Section I: Governance — Legislation
Includes a synopsis of relevant definitions and implications of federal and provincial legislation specific to situations that may occur in schools.

Section II: Governance — Policy Development
Deals with development, implementation and evaluation of effective policy.

Section III: Violence Prevention
Outlines the criteria for selecting, developing and evaluating effective prevention programs. Includes current programs and initiatives available to Alberta schools.

Section IV: Intervention — Crisis Response and Follow-Up
Outlines crisis management planning and reporting on crisis or disaster situations.

Section V: Communications and Follow-Up Reports
Lists the essential elements of communicating in a crisis, ensuring student and staff safety, and dealing with the media.

Section VI: Support Organizations and Agencies
Includes information on school-community programs and partnerships in addition to specific school programs that can meet the needs of students who are at risk of not completing traditional school programs.

Section VII: Staff Development and Teaching Resources
Includes a sampling of recommended teaching and learning resources that complements the Alberta Programs of Study and promotes safe and caring schools.

Appendices and Bibliography
Includes forms, such as a Safe and Caring School Scan, crisis response forms and reports, and the bibliography.

Section I: Governance — Legislation

This section explains the implications of various pieces of federal and provincial legislation as they relate to the operation of schools. Relevant legislation is discussed as part of a particular issue, such as "search and seizures" or "harassment." In some instances, the actual legislation is cited. In other cases, the implications of the legislation for "what you do" and "how you do it" are provided. The intent is to facilitate action which is legally, professionally and educationally sound. Additional legal and professional advice is available from member services of The Alberta Teachers' Association and legal services of the Alberta School Boards Association. Some school boards also have legal services departments to assist school-based administrators and staff.

Best Educational Interests

The best educational interest of the student is the paramount consideration in the exercise of any authority under the Alberta *School Act*.

Right to an Education

Section 3(1) of the Alberta *School Act* states:

> 3(1) Every individual
>
> (a) who at September 1 in a year is 6 years of age or older and younger than 19 years of age, and
>
> (b) who is
>
> (i) a Canadian citizen,
>
> (ii) lawfully admitted to Canada for permanent residence,
>
> (iii) a child of a Canadian citizen, or
>
> (iv) a child of an individual who is lawfully admitted to Canada for permanent or temporary residence
>
> is entitled to have access in that school year to an education program in accordance with this *Act*.

Responsibility of Boards

Section 28(7) of the *School Act* highlights the importance of providing a safe and caring environment by placing a duty on boards to ensure students are secure from danger, harm or loss and there is attention to and concern with meeting the needs of the student and others.

> 28(7) A board shall ensure that each student enrolled in a school operated by the board is provided with a safe and caring environment which fosters and maintains respectful and responsible behaviours.

School boards must take the necessary steps to develop an appropriate base to support the efforts of school staff and community members to provide a safe and caring environment. Providing a comprehensive framework that integrates legislation, effective policies, programs and practices ensures that each student learns in an environment which fosters and maintains respectful and responsible behaviours.

Responsibility to Students

Section 28 of the *School Act* places the responsibility for providing the education program for its resident students on the school board.

> 28(1) A board shall ensure that each of its resident students is provided with an education program consistent with the requirements of this *Act* and the regulations.

A student is a resident student of the board of the district or division in which the student's parent or guardian resides.

A board shall make all reasonable efforts to ensure that a student who is a resident student of the board or who is enrolled in a school operated by the board attends school. Charter schools and private schools must also ensure that students enrolled in their schools attend school. Excuses from attendance at school include sickness, religious holidays, suspensions and expulsions. Enforcing school attendance is outlined in sections 9 and 10 of the *School Act*.

To ensure that Alberta's youth receive an education, the *School Act* contains compulsory attendance requirements for individuals who at September 1 in a year are 6 years of age or older and are younger than 16 years of age.

It has been successfully argued in the courts that education is considered a liberty right under section 7 of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*. Therefore, students have a constitutional right to education. Section 7 holds that:

> s.7 Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of the person and the right not to be deprived thereof except in accordance with the principles of fundamental justice.

The second part of this statement has significant implications for actions which would deprive a student of an education, such as suspensions and expulsions. The "principles of fundamental justice" are discussed under the heading Natural Justice, below.

Section 7 of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* and section 3 of the Alberta *School Act* emphasize the importance of education in our society. Because school boards are legally required to provide an education program to all eligible resident students, depriving students of an education is a last resort subject to judicial reviews. When a student is denied access to an education program, the procedures followed must incorporate fairness and comply with the principles of natural justice.

Natural Justice

To comply with the principles of natural justice, procedural fairness must be evident. This means students must be made aware, in advance, of the code of conduct they are expected to comply with, and of the consequences of non-compliance with the various elements of the code. They must be provided an opportunity to make representation, either themselves or through an agent acting on their behalf, and call witnesses and present evidence in their defence to the body hearing the case. The body hearing the appeal must also be unbiased as it adjudicates the case. For example, a school board that receives background information on an incident which occurs in a school and then orders the superintendent or principal, as an agent of the board, to take a particular action, could not serve as an unbiased body to hear an appeal on behalf of a student affected by the action directed by the board.

Students with Special Needs

The Alberta *School Act*, and federal and provincial human rights legislation guarantee that all children, including those with special needs, have the right to access an education program. The responsibilities of school boards to provide programs for students with special needs are further set out in section 29 of the *School Act* and in related policies of Alberta Learning.

The *School Act* states:

> 29(1) A board may determine that a student is, by virtue of the student's behavioural, communicational, intellectual, learning or physical characteristics, or a combination of those characteristics, a student in need of a special education program.
>
> (2) Subject to section 30, a student who is determined by a board to be in need of a special education program is entitled to have access to a special education program provided in accordance with this *Act*.
>
> (3) Before a board places a student in a special education program it shall
>
> (a) consult with the parent of that student, and
>
> (b) where appropriate, consult with the student.

A special education program is based on the student's individualized program plan (IPP). An IPP is a written concise plan of action to address the student's special needs. Every student with an identified special need is required by provincial policy to have an IPP. Alberta Learning's requirements and expectations are outlined in greater detail in the *Guide to Education for Students with Special Needs*. The guide is available at no cost from the Special Education Branch, Alberta Learning at (780) 422–6326.

Decisions about the appropriate placement of students with special needs are based on the needs of the student in consultation with parents and, where appropriate, the student. It is expected that educating students with special needs in regular classrooms in neighbourhood or local schools is the first placement option considered by school boards, in consultation with students, parents and staff. Other options may be considered for students with severe or complex needs who require more intensive or specialized programs in order to best meet their needs. School boards are ultimately responsible for making placement decisions that are in the best interests of individual students and of all students they serve. Parents have the right to appeal the decisions of employees of school boards regarding the placement and/or special educational programs provided to their children. Parents may request, in writing, that the Minister review the school board's decision under section 104 of the *School Act*. The Minister may make whatever decision with respect to the matter in dispute that appears to him or her to be appropriate in the circumstances and that decision is final. Parents may then choose to pursue the matter further through the courts.

Federal/ Provincial Legislation

The following definitions of federal/provincial legislation are provided as they apply to specific situations that may occur in schools. Each definition is accompanied by a brief explanation as to its intent and implications for school administrators.

Assaults

A common assault occurs when one person intentionally applies force or the serious threat of force against another person without his or her consent. Such consent must be given freely, not coerced by the use of authority or fraud. A common assault is a violation of section 265(1) of the *Criminal Code of Canada*.

> *Legislation cannot change the heart, it can only restrain the heartless.*
>
> Martin Luther King Jr.

265(1) A person commits an assault when
(a) without the consent of another person, he applies force intentionally to that other person, directly or indirectly
(b) he attempts or threatens, by an act or a gesture, to apply force to another person, if he has, or causes that other person to believe on reasonable grounds that he has, present ability to effect his purpose; or
(c) while openly wearing or carrying a weapon or an imitation thereof, he accosts or impedes another person or begs.

(2) This section applies to all forms of assault, including sexual assault, sexual assault with a weapon, threats to a third party or causing bodily harm and aggravated sexual assault.

(3) For the purposes of this section, no consent is obtained where the complainant submits or does not resist by reason of
(a) the application of force to the complainant or to a person other than the complainant;

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(b) threats or fear of the application of force to the complainant or to a person other than the complainant;
(c) fraud; or
(d) the exercise of authority.

Assault charges have been brought against adults and students as a result of physical altercations at school or while participating in school-related activities.

The use of force by teachers in the discharge of their duties needs some elaboration. Teachers may need to use some degree of force to protect themselves from harm, protect another person from being harmed or prevent students from harming themselves. Section 43 of the *Criminal Code of Canada* allows teachers and other adults acting in loco parentis (whereby they act in relation to students as responsible caring parents) to use reasonable force against students under certain circumstances.

> s.43. Every schoolteacher, parent or person standing in the place of a parent is justified in using force by way of correction toward a pupil or child, as the case may be, who is under his care, if the force does not exceed what is reasonable under the circumstances.

This section of the *Criminal Code* has been used as a defence by school personnel who found it necessary to use force and were charged with assault as a result. Recent court decisions involving charges of assault against teachers provide some guidance regarding reasonable force. Any force used by a teacher should be defensive in nature, such as restraining, holding, subduing; rather than offensive, such as hitting, kicking, excessive restraint or aggressive physical contact. The use of force should be a last resort because teachers are expected to model non-violent conflict resolution strategies.

School personnel may have to use force to protect themselves from assault (section 34) or to protect their students from assault (section 37).

> s.34.(1) Every one who is unlawfully assaulted without having provoked the assault is justified in repelling force by force if the force he uses is not intended to cause death or grievous bodily harm and is no more than is necessary to enable him to defend himself.

> s.37. Every one is justified in using force to defend himself or any one under his protection from assault, if he uses no more force than is necessary to prevent the assault or the repetition of it.

The duty of care placed upon teachers necessitates action to protect all students from harm. Such action should avoid the use of force whenever possible. Educators can access non-violent crisis intervention workshops through most major school jurisdictions or local mental health units.

VERBAL ASSAULTS

Verbal assaults or threatening actions are covered by section 264.1(1) of the *Criminal Code*.

> s.264.1(1) Every one commits an offence who, in any manner, knowingly utters, conveys or causes any person to receive a threat
> (a) to cause death or bodily harm to any person
> (b) to burn, destroy or damage real or personal property, or
> (c) to kill, poison or injure an animal or bird that is the property of any person.

Verbal assaults are a subtle form of violence. Any aggressive behaviour that is directed to or results in intimidating another person psychologically or morally must be dealt with and treated as seriously as physical assaults. Recognizing the non-physical subtler forms of violence provides a basis for supporting students who are victimized by bullying, intimidation and/or verbal harassment.

SEXUAL ASSAULT

If an assault is committed in circumstances of a sexual nature whereby the sexual integrity of the victim is violated and/or the accused gained some sexual gratification, it becomes a sexual assault. The three elements of common assault, namely intentional act, lack of consent and the use or threat of force must also be present. Being granted consent does not constitute a defence if the victim is less than 14 years of age or if such consent has been obtained by someone in a position of authority from a young person 14 or over but less than 18 years of age. Most adult employees in schools are seen to be in a position of authority relative to students.

Child Abuse

Many cases of child abuse are initially identified by someone at school. School personnel must be knowledgeable about what constitutes abuse and what the legal requirements are for reporting possible cases of child abuse. All teachers operate under a duty of care to their students and must fulfill that duty particularly as it relates to situations in which children are in need of protective services for any reason outlined under the *Child Welfare Act*.

A child in need of protective services is one who is neglected, physically abused, sexually abused or emotionally abused, or is at substantial risk of being so treated. A child may be in need of protective services when a person responsible for the child neglects to provide the child with necessary care (food, clothing, shelter, required medical care), supervision or opportunities for development. Physical abuse occurs when a child is physically injured through a non-accidental application of force or an agent to the child's body. Sexual abuse occurs when a child is inappropriately exposed or subjected to sexual contact, activity or behaviour. Emotional abuse occurs if there is substantial and observable impairment of the child's mental or emotional functioning. This includes evidence of a mental or behavioural disorder, such as anxiety, depression, withdrawal, aggression or delayed development. There also needs to be reasonable and probable grounds to believe that there is:

- emotional injury resulting from rejection, deprivation of affection or cognitive stimulation
- exposure to domestic violence or severe domestic disharmony
- inappropriate criticism, threats, humiliation, accusations or expectations of or toward the child
- an unstable mental or emotional condition of the guardian of the child
- chronic alcohol or drug abuse by anyone living in the same residence as the child.

The *Child Welfare Act* states, "any person who has reasonable and probable grounds to believe and believes that a child is in need of protective services shall forthwith report the matter to a director." "Director" means a director appointed under the *Child Welfare Act* by the Minister of Children's Services. The *Act* does not provide for a chain of reporting within the school, whereby a teacher might report to the counsellor who in turn might report to the principal, who then may decide what action is to be taken. Teachers do not need specific permission from their principal before making a report directly to Child Welfare. Further, no principal can direct a teacher not to report if the teacher believes abuse exists. If any person believes a child is in need of protective services and fails to ensure that the case is reported, that person, according to the *Act*, is "guilty of an offence and liable to a fine of not more than $2,000 and in default of payment to imprisonment for a term of not more than six months."

It is not the duty of school personnel to assess the severity of the abuse, but to provide the following information:

- child's name, age, address
- name, address of alleged perpetrator
- when, where the alleged incident or disclosure took place
- description of indicators
- additional concerns or information.

A disclosure made by a student to school personnel must be made in the student's own words. The record should include observed facts, such as the student's behaviour, actions, comments made, persons present at the time and/or physical marks. School personnel, while providing support, should not interview the student after receiving the initial disclosure, as this could interfere with the investigation and contaminate the evidence.

Notes, reports or written observations on alleged abuse are to be kept separate from the student's school record and any other record accessible to staff. Records should be disclosed only to police or child welfare workers during the investigation process. Teachers who keep their own records of any report may be required to submit them as evidence in certain proceedings. Such records may be accessible to certain parties under the freedom of information legislation.

Children Involved in Prostitution

With the proclamation of Alberta's *Protection of Children Involved in Prostitution Act* in 1999, children involved in prostitution are considered to be victims of sexual abuse. The *Child Welfare Act* has been amended so that those soliciting a male or female prostitute under the age of 18 are subject to a charge of child abuse punishable by a fine or prison sentence.

Since this is considered a form of child abuse, the requirement to report is the same as for other forms of child abuse, as discussed in the preceding section.

Detention

It is important to differentiate the word "detention" as it applies to "keeping a student in" as a disciplinary action at school, as opposed to being "held in custody" for questioning or punishment as part of a possible criminal matter. Principals and teachers are required by sections 15 and 13 of the *School Act* to maintain order and discipline among students in schools. As part of the ongoing disciplinary process in schools, students are often called into an office and questioned about their behaviour and activities. Students may also be required to spend time in a certain location to do assigned tasks as a detention. The actions of school personnel in these situations are not subject to the provisions of the *Young Offenders Act* or the *Canadian Charter*.

However, if the offence being investigated is serious and warrants a student being held in custody because a criminal investigation and/or criminal charges may be forthcoming, the principal and/or the teacher is considered a "person in authority." School personnel are viewed as agents of the police in such an investigation. Questioning by either the police or school officials and any resulting statement are subject to section 56 of the *Young Offenders Act*. This section requires those questioning a young person (12 years old or older but under 18) to inform the young person, in age-appropriate language, that he or she is not obliged to make a statement and that any such statement may be used in evidence against the young person. Also, the young person must be informed that he or she has the right to consult a lawyer, a parent or any other adult of his or her choosing before making a statement. The young person may waive these rights after being informed of them. The waiver must be in writing.

If a school official is questioning an adult; e.g., principal or teacher about a possible criminal offence, the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* applies. Again, the investigator is regarded as a person in authority and/or an agent of the police. The person being questioned must be told of his or her right to consult counsel and the right to remain silent. If a criminal investigation is the likely result of the action of the adult, the matter should be turned over to police immediately.

The investigator must have reasonable grounds for questioning. Section 9 of the *Canadian Charter* states, "Everyone has the right not to be arbitrarily detained or imprisoned." Randomly questioning people about their involvement in possibly criminal activities violates the *Canadian Charter*.

If the offence being investigated is sufficiently serious to possibly warrant criminal proceedings, or if the protection of the public or school community is at issue, school personnel are well-advised to turn the investigation over to police.

Discrimination and Harassment

A positive school environment supports mutual respect among all individuals and protects the dignity, worth and human rights of every person. The *Alberta Human Rights, Citizenship and Multiculturalism Act; The Alberta Teachers' Association Code of Professional Conduct;* the *Criminal Code of Canada*; the Alberta *School Act* and the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* all contain sections which protect the rights of individuals to be free from discrimination on such grounds as race, religion, colour, sex, physical characteristics, mental ability, age, ancestry and/or place of origin. School board and school policy should support an environment free from intentional or unintentional racial, ethnocultural, religious or sexual harassment for all students, employees, visitors and trustees. Human rights legislation is usually the first protection sought against discrimination in the workplace. Discrimination must not be tolerated.

A recent amendment to the *School Act*, section 2.01 reinforces the principles of respect for diversity, and understanding and respect for others in all Alberta schools. It is intended to prepare students to become caring and responsible citizens in our diverse society.

> 2.01(1) All education programs offered and instructional materials used in schools must reflect the diverse nature and heritage of society in Alberta, promote understanding and respect for others, and honour and respect the common values and beliefs of Albertans.
>
> 2.01(2) For greater certainty, education programs and instructional materials referred to in subsection (1) must not promote or foster doctrines of racial or ethnic superiority or persecution, religious intolerance or persecution, social change through violent action or disobedience of laws.

Those creating or disseminating hate propaganda which is intended to promote hatred, discrimination or intolerance toward groups or individuals because they are distinct, may be subject to section 318 or 319 of the *Criminal Code*. Hate propaganda may be communicated using graffiti, leaflets, telephone messages, posters, broadcasts or computer messages. Instances involving hate propaganda must be treated seriously. Not to do so could constitute negligence and expose the board and its employees to legal liability.

HARASSMENT: NON-SEXUAL

Much of the behaviour associated with non-sexual harassment is commonly referred to as "bullying" (see pages 60–62 for more on bullying). The actions of the perpetrator may constitute an assault under the *Criminal Code* as defined earlier. Bullying may also be non-physical, taking the form of intimidation, threat, extortion, exclusion, teasing and taunting. All these activities are used by bullies to gain control or power.

Usually, such behaviour is addressed through school discipline policies. Section 7 of the *School Act* provides legislation to support school rules, and sections 19 and 19.1 permit the suspension and expulsion of students who fail to comply with the code of conduct outlined in section 7. School boards must have policy in place to guide the actions of school-based personnel.

The *Criminal Code* could also be used to address serious verbal or coercive harassment situations. Section 264.1(1) dealing with threatening behaviour was quoted earlier. Other relevant sections follow.

> s.423. Intimidation
> Every one who, wrongfully and without lawful authority, for the purpose of compelling another person to abstain from doing anything that he has a lawful right to do, or to do anything he has a lawful right to abstain from doing,
> (a) uses violence or threats of violence to that person or his spouse or children, or injures his property
> (b) intimidates or attempts to intimidate that person or a relative of that person by threats that, in Canada or elsewhere, violence or other injury will be done to or punishment inflicted upon him or a relative of his, or that the property of any of them will be damaged.

s.346. Extortion

(1) Every one commits extortion who, without reasonable justification or excuse and with intent to obtain anything, by threats, accusations, menaces or violence induces or attempts to induce any person, whether or not he is the person threatened, accused or menaced or to whom violence is shown, to do anything or cause anything to be done.

The issue of harassment because of sexual orientation has been addressed in some jurisdictions. School boards can choose to address this situation through policy which provides direction and guidance to its employees. For example, the Calgary Board of Education has developed policy in this area based on community input. The Alberta School Boards Association will assist school boards in policy development. All students in school, on school grounds and participating in school-sponsored activities must be free from any form of discrimination or harassment.

School personnel must realize the serious consequences of peer-on-peer harassment, or bullying. Bullying creates an atmosphere of fear for all students. It is the responsibility of adults in the school to be ready, willing and able to intervene. Parents have successfully sued school officials for not protecting students from the negative effects of bullying and/or harassment. Civil action lawsuits are further discussed under the heading Negligence and Liability on the following page.

HARASSMENT: SEXUAL

The results of the two-year study reveal that sexual harassment is an everyday reality for females in virtually all secondary schools.

MacDougall, 1993, p. 43.

Offensive physical actions of a sexual nature, such as touching, pinching, grabbing, fondling, patting and threatening acts, may constitute sexual assault under the *Criminal Code*. Other equally serious but less obvious actions of a non-physical nature, such as whistling, sexual comments, demands, threats, propositions, leering, crude jokes, flashing, obscene pictures and persistent invitations to date constitute sexual harassment.

The Alberta Human Rights and Citizenship Commission defines sexual harassment as, "any unwelcome behaviour, sexual in nature, that adversely affects or threatens to affect, directly or indirectly, a person's job security, working conditions or prospects for promotion or earnings; or prevents a person from getting a job, living accommodations or any kind of public service." The commission further defines sexual harassment as, "usually an attempt by one person to exert power over someone else. It can be perpetrated by a supervisor, a co-worker, a landlord or a service provider." Many civil action cases have been brought against employers and their agents (teachers and administrators in schools) for failing to maintain a safe, harassment-free work or learning environment. In Alberta, human rights legislation specifically holds employers and persons in authority acting as agents of the employer, liable if they fail to take appropriate action after becoming aware that sexual harassment has occurred in their workplace.

To mitigate this liability, school boards and schools should have harassment policies in place and act upon these policies to ensure a teaching and learning environment free from both sexual and non-sexual harassment.

Negligence and Liability

School boards have a responsibility to provide for the safety and security of students, employees and visitors within the school. An individual who suffers damage to his or her person, property or reputation while involved in a school or school-sponsored activity can initiate a civil action based upon an allegation of negligence.

Negligence consists of not doing something a prudent and reasonable person would have done in a particular situation, or of doing something a reasonable and prudent person would not have done in a situation. Because school employees often possess expert knowledge with respect to the handling of such things as chemicals, machinery, equipment or apparatus, they are expected to exercise a higher standard of care in certain situations than would the ordinary parent or person. To establish negligence four elements must be present:

- the plaintiff must have suffered some damage
- the damage must have been caused by some act or omission on the part of the defendant
- the act or omission must be one that falls below the standard of care applicable to the situation
- the defendant must have owed the plaintiff a duty of care and must have breached that duty by the act or omission in question.

Section 44 of the *School Act* requires school boards to carry liability insurance to cover their exposure, including the exposure of employees and others acting on behalf of and with the knowledge of the board. Any action against the board and/or its agents should be dealt with by the insurance company (or equivalent agency) that is providing the coverage required by the *School Act*.

Privacy Rights

Originally, the *Young Offenders Act* precluded the sharing of information about the identity of young offenders and the nature of their offences with school officials. Any reports concerning an offence by a young person could not identify the offender or the names of young persons aggrieved by the offence or serving as witnesses in connection with the offence. A youth court judge has the discretion to permit the publication of a young offender's identity if it is determined to be appropriate.

Amendments in 1995 to section 28(1.13) of this *Act* permit the disclosure, to an appropriate representative of a school board or school, of the names of young offenders attending school and the nature of the offences. This information can only be disclosed to ensure:

- procurement of information for a report required by the *Act*
- compliance with a release from custody authorization under the *Young Offenders Act* for purposes of attending school
- compliance with an order of any court concerning bail, probation or conditional supervision
- safety of staff, students or other persons.

The school official in receipt of the original disclosure of information can further disclose such information only if the disclosure is necessary for one or more of the purposes listed in the previous paragraph. It is important that all information received as part of the disclosure be kept separate from other school records pertaining to the young person to prevent unauthorized access to the information. As well, the information must be destroyed when it is no longer required for the purpose for which it was disclosed. School officials can now appeal for more information if they believe the initial disclosure is inadequate.

A detailed *Young Offenders Information Sharing Protocol* is available from Alberta Learning at (780) 422–6326 or toll-free in Alberta by dialling 310–0000. This information is particularly

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helpful in developing school board policy and school procedures to deal with the disclosure of information regarding students with young offender status. As well, the Alberta School Boards Association provides policy development assistance to school boards.

Student Record Regulation

The *School Act* (section 18), *Student Record Regulation* and *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FOIPP)* govern the collecting and disclosing of personal information on students. According to section 2 of the *Regulation*, the student's record must contain all information affecting the decisions made about the education of the student that is collected or maintained by a board, regardless of the manner in which it is maintained or stored. Although discretion resides with a board or charter school to determine the manner in which information is maintained or stored, all information collected or disclosed is governed by the *FOIPP Act*.

Section 18 of the *School Act* indicates who may review a student record that is maintained by a board. The student, the student's parents and anyone who has access to the student under a separation agreement or an order of the court may review the record. If a district is dealing with an independent student who is 18 years of age or a student who is 16 years of age who lives independently or is under agreement with other government agencies (*School Act*, section 1(1)(h)(ii)), then the parent has no right of access to the student record under the *Act*.

If there is a question regarding legal access to a student by any individual, school officials must insist on receiving the relevant court order or separation agreement. They must then base decisions regarding access to a student and his or her record on that order of the court or separation agreement.

A new requirement of the *Student Record Regulation*, section 2(1)(b), is designed to ensure the Department of Learning student identifier and any other identifier assigned to the student by the board is on the student's record. Other identifiers could include the school's local student identification number or special education codes assigned to a student for funding or monitoring purposes.

Another new requirement states that information relating to suspensions and expulsions in sections 19 and 19.1 of the *School Act* be placed on a student's record. This information is to be maintained for a period of one year following the date of the suspension or expulsion, or until June 30th of the following year in which the suspension or expulsion occurred, whichever is the latest. This retention period is consistent with section 34 of the *FOIPP Act* which requires that personal information used to make decisions directly affecting individuals be accurate and complete, and be retained for at least one year after using it so that an individual can obtain access to it.

Section 2(4) of the *Regulation* expressly states for boards what information is not to be placed on a student's record. Boards must remember that people have a right to request access to their records. Although a right of access exists, exceptions may apply to disclosure. For example, information in the record may be withheld if disclosure is harmful to the safety or health of the applicant, or damaging to a law enforcement matter. This personal information is also subject to the privacy protection under the *FOIPP Act*. Boards must make reasonable security arrangements to prevent unauthorized access. Boards must also keep in mind that section 34 of the *FOIPP Act* sets out a minimum retention of one year if the information is used to make a decision that directly affects the individual student whose personal information is contained in the record.

The *Student Record Regulation* recognizes that information of a sensitive nature, which would normally not be disclosed; e.g., a student's violent tendencies, may be placed in a student's record if the board decides it is in the public's interest to do so and if it ensures the safety of staff and other students. Section 2(6) provides discretion to boards to determine when sensitive personal information may be placed on the record. If information of this nature is placed on the student record, the board should make efforts to keep the sensitive information to a minimum. This balances the student's right to protection of privacy with other students' rights to safety.

Section 5(2)(b)(ii) of the *Regulation* permits a board to disclose information from a student's record to an employee or agent of the board if the information is necessary and relevant to a matter being dealt with by the employee. Disclosure of student information to Department of Justice and Attorney General officials (Government of Alberta), or designates; e.g., youth justice committees, is permitted under a new provision of the *Regulation* (section 5(3)). This provision permits information to be disclosed for the purpose of administrating the *Young Offenders Act*. Information in a student's record can be shared without having to obtain the consent of the young person or a court order compelling production of specific information; e.g., student attendance and performance which is needed for the preparation of a predisposition report and/or required to carry out any program or policy under the *Act*. Police officers can access information from a student's record only if they are acting as agents of a school board or in direct relation to a predisposition report, program or policy under the *Young Offenders Act*.

Section 2(4)(5)(6) of the *Student Record Regulation* include specific provisions on what information can be placed on a record. Disclosure of personal information, not contained in the *Student Record Regulation* is governed by the provisions under the *FOIPP Act*.

Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FOIPP)

There are two major parts to the *FOIPP Act*. Part 1 deals with access to records held by public bodies as defined under the *Act*. Records that are in the custody or under the control of a school board or charter school may be the subject of a request for access under the *Act*. Records in the custody of the school are under the control of the school board or charter school. It is therefore incumbent upon each school to ensure consistent treatment of records.

Part 2 deals with the rules governing the protection of privacy of individual personal information held by public bodies. It deals with how a public body must collect, use and disclose personal information on a daily basis. Personal information is extensively defined in the *Act* under section 1(1)(n) as "recorded information about an identifiable individual," including:

- the individual's name and address
- the individual's race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religious or political beliefs or associations
- the individual's age, sex, marital status or family status
- information about the individual's educational, financial, employment or criminal history, including criminal records where a pardon has been given
- anyone's opinion about the individual
- the individual's personal views or opinions, except if they are about someone else.

The *Student Record Regulation* and *FOIPP Act* permit disclosure of information of a personal or sensitive nature within a school district to employees who require the information to perform their duties. Section 36 of *FOIPP* requires that school boards take reasonable security measures to prevent unauthorized access. School boards need to develop written policy and procedures to ensure that when personal information is disclosed to staff, it is done in such a way that a student's personal privacy is balanced with the safety of other students and staff.

Disclosure of personal information of a sensitive nature from outside sources, such as police officers or child welfare workers must be:

- limited to that which is necessary to ensure safety of staff and students
- on a need-to-know basis
- to designated school staff members only.

In order to ensure the safety of other staff and students, personal information may subsequently need to be disclosed to school staff. This may be necessary to:

- identify individuals who could be at risk
- identify staff who are willing to assume responsibility and receive training to deal with any crisis situation, should one arise
- develop recommendations for reducing the occurrence of violent behaviours.

The *FOIPP Act* is directed at ensuring the rights of individuals are met while balancing the legitimate needs of public bodies and others. School administrators need to be informed and knowledgeable about the rules regarding how and for what purposes public bodies can collect, use, access and disclose personal information, and the privacy rights of individuals. It is also essential to have good records management systems and processes at all levels throughout the jurisdiction or charter school.

All school jurisdictions and charter schools should designate a FOIPP co-ordinator and develop local practices and procedures to ensure proper implementation of the *Act*. School boards and charter schools need to provide subsequent training to school-based personnel to ensure compliance with the *Act* in accordance with school board or charter school policy.

Search and Seizure

Sections 13 and 15 of the *School Act* require teachers and principals to maintain order and discipline among students while they are in the school or on the school grounds and while they are attending or participating in activities sponsored or approved by the board. To fulfill this requirement, school officials have sometimes found it necessary to conduct a search of a student, his or her locker, or his or her belongings. The seizure of substances, articles and/or objects may follow such a search. How can these searches and seizures be conducted legally?

Section 8 of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* states:

> s.8 Everyone has the right to be secure against unreasonable search and seizure.

School personnel must meet the standard of reasonableness when conducting a search of a student, his or her locker, or his or her belongings. If the search is to determine whether a school rule has been broken, the school official is acting as an agent of the board. A search of a student is properly instituted in those circumstances where the teacher or principal conducting the search has reasonable and probable grounds to believe that a school rule has been violated and the evidence of the breach will be found on the student. These grounds may be provided by information received from just one student that the school authority considers credible. Alternatively, the reasonable grounds may be based upon information from more than one student or from observations of teachers or principals, or from a combination of information which, considered together, the relevant authority believes to be credible.[7]

A modified standard of reasonable searches applies to searches of students on school property conducted by teachers or school officials within the scope of their responsibility and authority to maintain order, discipline and safety within the school. This standard does not apply to any actions taken which are beyond the scope of the authority of teachers or principals. Further, a different situation arises if the school authorities are acting as agents of the police. A school official is an agent of the police if any collaboration occurs between the police and the school authority before the search is conducted.[8]

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[7] From R. v. M.R.M. (1998, November 26). The Supreme Court of Canada, Recents Judgments [Online], 22 pages. Available: http://www.droit.umontreal.ca/doc/csc-scc/en/rec/html/mrm.en.html [1998, November 30]. Montreal, PQ: LexUM (Centre de Recherche en Droit Public), Faculty of Law, University of Montreal.

[8] Ibid.

It is recommended that school officials who conduct any type of search on a student's person, his or her locker, or his or her property do so in accordance with the following test of reasonableness. School officials should be satisfied that:

- the *School Act* provides them with the authority to act (sections 13 and 15)
- they are acting in good faith
- there are reasonable and probable grounds to justify the search considering the student's history and record in school, the reliability of the source and the information used to justify the search, the prevalence and seriousness of the problem to which the search applies
- the search is reasonable in relation to the objectives of the search and is not excessively intrusive in light of the age and gender of the student, and the nature of the infraction.

The Ontario Court of Appeal had the opportunity to review a personal search in a school setting in R. v. J.M.G. In this case, the school principal searched a student's socks after being informed by another student that J.M.G. was in possession of drugs. The principal found marijuana and on the basis of this finding, police charged the student with possession. The judge upheld the search as reasonable. The principal had reasonable and probable grounds to proceed with a search and the search was not excessively intrusive.[9]

The same test of reasonableness applies when searching students' possessions at school or on school-sponsored activities. Searches of briefcases, backpacks and/or luggage must be based upon reasonable cause and not be excessively intrusive. Further, the Supreme Court of Canada ruled in R. v. M.R.M.[10] that teachers and principals are placed in a position of trust that carries onerous responsibilities of teaching and caring for children's safety and well-being. In reference to this case, the Supreme Court observed that in order to teach, school officials must provide an atmosphere that encourages learning. The possession of illicit drugs and dangerous weapons at school challenges the ability of school officials to fulfill their responsibilities. Teachers and school administrators must be provided with the flexibility required to deal with discipline problems in schools and act quickly and effectively. One way school authorities may be required to react reasonably is by conducting searches of students and seizing prohibited items. Where criminal law is involved, evidence found by a teacher or principal could possibly be used as evidence if police involvement is necessary.

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[9] From *Teachers and the law: a practical guide for educators* (p. 86), by A. W. MacKay & L. I. Sutherland, 1992; Toronto, ON: Emond Montgomery Publications Ltd. Reprinted with permission.

[10] From R. v. M.R.M. (1998, November 26). The Supreme Court of Canada, Recents Judgments [Online], 22 pages. Available: http://www.droit.umontreal.ca/doc/csc-scc/en/rec/html/mrm.en.html [1998, November 30]. Montreal, PQ: LexUM (Centre de Recherche en Droit Public), Faculty of Law, University of Montreal.

Locker searches add another dimension to the search and seizure operation. There has been considerable debate over the right of students to exclusive possession of their lockers. However, it is unrealistic to expect the courts to declare lockers out of bounds for school personnel. Students can expect exclusive possession of lockers vis-à-vis other students, but not against school authorities. However, school personnel searches of lockers should be based on reasonable cause if the results of the search might lead to police involvement. Students should be notified at the beginning of the year that their lockers are, in fact, school property and may be subject to search at any time.[11]

The Supreme Court of Canada has ruled that random searches are illegal and unconstitutional. Examples of random searches include using a police dog to sniff student lockers for drugs. Such searches would not be random if dogs were sniffing specific lockers where there was reliable information that drugs would be found. Another example of an illegal random search would be frisking an entire group or class of students who were in a room where something went missing, but when there was no specific information suggesting who might have taken the missing item.

Suspensions and Expulsions

School officials must be guided by school board policy and by sections 3, 7, 19, 19.1, 28 and 44 of the *School Act* when suspending or recommending expulsion of a student. The *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* and the *School Act* place a high priority on the rights of students to an education program. All resident students have a right to access an education program in a school year in accordance with sections 3 and 28 of the *Act*. This education cannot be seriously interrupted or denied except for just cause and in accordance with the principles of fundamental justice.

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[11] From *Teachers and the law: a practical guide for educators* (p. 87), by A. W. MacKay & L. I. Sutherland, 1992, Toronto, ON: Emond Montgomery Publications Ltd. Reprinted with permission.

Suspension is the temporary removal of a student's right to attend a class period, course, school program, school or ride the bus for a period not exceeding 10 school days for failure to comply with section 7 of the *Act* or for conduct injurious to the physical or mental well-being of others in the school (section 19(1)). Expulsion is the removal of a student's right to a particular school, one or more courses or education programs, or riding in a school bus for a period greater than 10 school days if the student has displayed an attitude of willful, blatant and repeated refusal to comply with section 7 or if the student's conduct is injurious to the physical or mental well-being of others in the school.

Boards must make rules regarding the circumstances in which a student may be suspended or expelled and the circumstances in which an expelled student may be re-enrolled according to section 44 of the *Act*. School board policy and rules need to be applied through all schools within the jurisdiction and balance the student's rights with the rights of other students. All decisions regarding suspensions and expulsions must be linked to a student's right to access an education program, and a fair and unbiased adjudication of the matter. The opportunity for the student and/or parent to meet with the principal to discuss the reasonableness of the suspension, make representation to the board and/or request that the Minister review the decision of a board to expel a student is a fundamental right to be accorded to all students and their parents. These rights guard against arbitrary and unfair practices.

Section II of this manual provides guidance in the development of effective proactive school board policies and procedures. Policies related to suspension and expulsion must comply with the parameters established in both the interpretation of suspension and expulsion, and sections 19 and 19.1 of the *Act*. These statutes deal with:

- time limits placed on suspensions by teachers, principals and the school board
- required notification of parents and the board
- the right of the parent or student to be granted a hearing of the matter
- the appeal process available to parents and students.

Further, section 103 of the *Act* provides that parents and/or students over 16 years of age can, within a reasonable time, appeal to the school board any decision by an employee of the board that significantly affects the education of a student. If a student is expelled, the student and/or parent may request in writing that the Minister review the decision of the board (section 104). The Minister may review the matter in any manner that he or she considers appropriate and make whatever decision that appears appropriate in the circumstances and that decision is final. Parents may choose to pursue the matter further through the courts.

If a student is expelled, the school board must ensure that the student continues to have access to an education program. Education programs include: alternative, virtual or outreach programs, and/or special education programs. Boards can also enter into agreements with another board or person to provide an education program or services as outlined in section 46(1) of the *Act*.

Visitors

WELCOME VISITORS

The *Occupier's Liability Act* places a duty on a person in control of premises (the principal) to take care that persons with rights to be on the premises (students, staff, welcome visitors) are reasonably safe. This legislation adds to the duty to maintain order and discipline in the school. The onus is for reasonable action under the circumstance of a particular situation to protect others from injury or damage. Failure to provide reasonable safety to students, staff and welcome visitors could be grounds for legal action should a person with rights to be on the premises be injured.

TRESPASSERS AND DISRUPTIVE VISITORS

Unwelcome visitors and intruders in schools, as well as visitors who become disruptive while at schools, can cause serious problems for administration and staff. Section 21 of the *School Act* is the main legislation used in dealing with this situation.

> 21(1) No person shall
>
> (a) disturb or interrupt the proceedings of a school,
>
> (b) disturb or interrupt the proceedings of a school meeting or board meeting, or
>
> (c) loiter or trespass in a school building or on property owned by a board.
>
> (2) No person shall canvass, sell or offer to sell goods, services or merchandise to a teacher or a student in a school without the prior approval of the board.

This section is supported by section 240 of the *Act*.

> 240 Any person who contravenes section 21, 63 or 93 is guilty of an offence and liable to a fine of not more than $1000.

School officials should remind offending persons of their legal obligations under the *School Act*. Usually this information is sufficient to bring about the desired results prior to police involvement. Disrupting the proceedings of a school or meeting, loitering, trespassing and canvassing are ticketable offences under the *Provincial Offences Procedure Act*. This means the police can be called and they will remove the offending party from the premises and issue a ticket to the offender.

Police should be called if a trespasser appears to be hostile or if his or her conduct is likely to injuriously affect the welfare of others. Only when no police assistance is available and force is necessary to prevent injury or serious property damage, should school officials resort to its use. In such situations, a school official should not act alone. Anyone lawfully assisting is permitted to do so as long as any force used is reasonable under the circumstances.

Vandalism

Section 11 of the *School Act* provides legal recourse to collect for damage to board property.

> 11(1) If property of a board is destroyed, damaged, lost or converted by the intentional or negligent act
>
> (a) of 1 student, the student and his parent are jointly and severally liable to the board in respect of the act of the student, or
>
> (b) of 2 or more students acting together, the students and their parents are jointly and severally liable to the board in respect of the act of the students.
>
> (2) Subsection (1) does not apply to the parent of an independent student.
>
> s.430. Mischief (*Criminal Code of Canada*)
> Every one commits mischief who willfully
> (a) destroys or damages property
> (b) renders property dangerous, useless, inoperative or ineffective
> (c) obstructs, interrupts or interferes with lawful use, enjoyment or operation of property, or
> (d) obstructs, interrupts or interferes with any person in the lawful use, enjoyment or operation of property.
>
> s.434. Arson (*Criminal Code of Canada*)
> Every person who intentionally or recklessly causes damage by fire or explosion to property that is not wholly owned by that person is guilty of an indictable offence and liable to imprisonment for a term not exceeding fourteen years.

Property damage or damage to data may be serious enough to proceed with criminal charges under the *Criminal Code of Canada*.

Safe, secure and caring schools are ones in which school board and personal property are treated with care and respect. School officials must ensure that acts of vandalism are responded to with appropriate consequences.

Professional Conduct: Teachers

All professional teachers in Alberta public schools who are members of The Alberta Teachers' Association are subject to *The Alberta Teachers' Association Code of Professional Conduct*. The following sections are of particular relevance to supporting safe, secure and caring schools.

Section 1. The teachers teach in a manner that respects the dignity and rights of all persons without prejudice as to race, religious beliefs, colour, sex, physical characteristics, age, ancestry.

Section 4. The teacher treats pupils with dignity and respect, and is considerate of their circumstances.

Section 5. The teacher may not divulge information about a pupil received in confidence or in the course of professional duties except as required by law or where, in the judgement of the teacher, to do so is in the best interest of the pupil.

Section 18. The teacher acts in a manner which maintains the honour and dignity of the profession.

Section 19. The teacher does not engage in activities which adversely affect the quality of the teacher's professional services.

The *Teaching Profession Act* requires the ATA to advise, assist, protect and discipline its members in the discharge of their professional duties and relationships. Violations of the *Code of Professional Conduct* or other conduct which constitutes unprofessional conduct as defined in the *Teaching Profession Act*, are to be reported to the executive secretary of The Alberta Teachers' Association for investigation. Section 22 of the *Teaching Profession Act* defines unprofessional conduct as follows.

s.22(1) Any conduct of a member that, in the opinion of a hearing committee,

- (a) is detrimental to the best interests of
  - (i) students as defined in the *School Act*,
  - (ii) the public, or
  - (iii) the teaching profession,
- (b) contravenes sections 15 to 64 or a by-law made under section 8(f) or (f.1), or
- (c) harms or tends to harm the standing of teachers generally,

whether or not that conduct is disgraceful or dishonourable, may be found by a hearing committee to constitute unprofessional conduct.

(2) If a member has been convicted of an indictable offence,

- (a) the conduct of the member on which the conviction is based is deemed to constitute unprofessional conduct, and
- (b) the member shall inform the association of the conviction forthwith.

All active members of The Alberta Teachers' Association are subject to this standard of professional conduct. Section 23(3) of the *Teaching Profession Act* requires members to report the unprofessional conduct of another member forthwith to the executive secretary of The Alberta Teachers' Association.

It is important that all teachers regularly review the elements of *The Alberta Teachers' Association Code of Professional Conduct*. There must be no doubt about the standard of conduct expected to be shown to employers, parents, students and colleagues. A copy of the ATA's *Code of Professional Conduct* is available from the ATA at (780) 447–9400 or toll-free at 1–800–232–7208.

Section II: Governance — Policy Development

It is not the enactment of legislation alone that ensures a safe, secure and caring environment in schools but rather the effective implementation of such legislation through sound school board and school policies, procedures and programs. Section II of this manual provides guidance in the development and implementation of effective policies to ensure an appropriate base to support the efforts of school communities to establish a safe, secure and caring school environment.

Conduct a Reality Check

The chart on the following page contains 11 key questions to answer before initiating the policy development process.[12]

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[12] Adapted from *Safe school communities: an information and policy guide for the prevention of violence* (p. 14), by S. Bareham & J. A. Clark, 1994, Vancouver, BC: British Columbia School Trustees Association. Adapted with permission.

Conduct a Reality Check[13]

1. Legitimacy: Is the policy legal? There must be demonstrated need, and the issue and proposed actions must be within your organization's authority and power to decide or influence.
   ☐ Yes ☐ No

2. Feasibility: Do you have a reasonable chance of achieving your objectives? . . . the will? . . . the resources? . . . the personnel necessary to monitor?
   ☐ Yes ☐ No

3. Support: Is there official and public support for the policy proposal? No policy will work without some measure of consensus or without voluntary consent.
   ☐ Yes ☐ No

4. Compatibility: Is the policy compatible with overall goals?
   ☐ Yes ☐ No

5. Adequacy: Does the policy adequately cover the issue? Will readers find out all they need to know?
   ☐ Yes ☐ No

6. Reasonableness: Is it reasonable? Does it make good, common sense?
   ☐ Yes ☐ No

7. Clarity: Is it free from jargon and unrelated information that may impair understanding?
   ☐ Yes ☐ No

8. Practicality: Can personnel deal with it and make it work within other policies and practices?
   ☐ Yes ☐ No

9. Affordability: Determine the cost. Is the cost justifiable?
   ☐ Yes ☐ No

10. Co-operation: Will most people comply with the policy voluntarily and without excessive enforcement or constant challenges?
    ☐ Yes ☐ No

11. Evaluation: Have the criteria to measure the success of the policy been defined?
    ☐ Yes ☐ No

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[13] Adapted from *Safe school communities: an information and policy guide for the prevention of violence* (p. 14), by S. Bareham & J. A. Clark, 1994, Vancouver, BC: British Columbia School Trustees Association. Adapted with permission.

The Alberta School Boards Association (ASBA) publication, *A Safe Place: Creating Peaceful Schools* (1994), provides guidance for school boards as they develop policy to support safe, secure and caring schools. The ASBA based this document, "on the premise that the issue should be addressed from a developmental perspective, hopefully before violence occurs, or from an intervention perspective as opposed to a punitive perspective" (p. 1).

> *A board must take all reasonable steps to protect its students and staff.*
>
> Alberta School Boards Association, 1994, p. 8.

Effective policies, procedures and programs at the school board and school level can greatly reduce the incidence of violence and minimize the negative effects of disruptive behaviour should it occur. Research shows that co-ordinated efforts of the entire school staff, guided by sound district and school policies, under the leadership of the principal, in collaboration with community support agencies, provide the best chance for the success of such initiatives.

Policy Development

CONSIDERATIONS

Legislation alone does not ensure a safe school. Rather, it is ensured by the effective implementation of such legislation through sound policies, procedures and programs. Comprehensive policies designed to formally address violence and promote safe schools have both preventative and responsive aspects. By describing the expectations for the conduct of students and staff within a school setting, policies meet the criteria for being preventive. When a violent incident occurs, a good policy should leave little room for discretion and specify the consequences in a consistent and fair manner.[14]

The following are guiding principles for developing policy. The policy:

- fits the mission or philosophy of the organization
- includes a context of why the policy is needed
- references the related legislation, regulations, policies and practices
- defines the terms in operational ways so actions based on the policy are consistent, fair and appropriate

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[14] Adapted from *An Educator's guide to violence in schools* (p. 183), by E. M. Roher, 1997, Aurora, ON: Aurora Professional Press. Reproduced from *An Educator's Guide to Violence in Schools* with the permission of Aurora Professional Press, through the Canadian Copyright Licensing Agency.

- focuses on goals, objectives and outcomes rather than on process, and supports the focus on results
- leads to consistent behaviour and helps students and staff understand their roles, rights and responsibilities
- contains appropriate consequences rather than punitive discipline actions
- is stated in positive terms, and provides guidance and support for appropriate actions by all those working to ensure safe schools
- is developed and implemented by those affected by the policy
- references the implementation date
- is implemented by trained personnel.

It is important to focus on a comprehensive policy that includes broad guidelines rather than creating a number of policies for a variety of situations. Too many policies may become difficult to regulate and may hamper the ability of schools to deal with unique situations that arise at the school level. Policies or regulations that are too cumbersome will not meet the needs of diverse schools or students. Schools need broad guidelines from which they can plan their own programs and guidelines using a contextual approach.

The first challenge facing policy makers is to ensure that the proposed policy fits with the overall mission or philosophy of the organization and/or with the goal of creating safe and caring schools. The second challenge is to define the terms used in an operational way, so actions based upon the policy are consistent, fair and appropriate. Good policy leads to consistent behaviour and helps students and staff understand their roles, rights and responsibilities.

Effective implementation of policy, procedures and programs requires training for staff and students. Policies are only effective to the extent that they are implemented and consistently applied. Training programs dealing with anger management, conflict resolution, mediation, peer coaching and crisis intervention could be an integral part of programs to foster and support respectful and responsible behaviour in schools.

CONGRUENCE

The importance of ensuring a safe, secure and caring learning and teaching environment should be reflected in a number of policies developed by a school board. There is a need for consistency among these policies. Policies dealing with student conduct, discipline, maintenance of school property, student transportation, off-campus education, supervision and evaluation of staff, supervision of students, suspensions and expulsions, school visitors (welcome and intruders) and school-community collaboration may all contain elements which directly support safety and security in schools operated by a board.

Many school boards are currently reviewing their policies to ensure a comprehensive, consistent governing approach. As mentioned earlier, the Alberta School Boards Association's publication, *A Safe Place: Creating Peaceful Schools*, was prepared by the Policy Advisory Service, Corporate Services Division for its member boards. This comprehensive guide to policy development is a valuable resource to assist policy makers.

CHARACTERISTICS

As much as possible, school board philosophies and policies should be stated in positive terms. Board policies must also provide guidance and support for appropriate actions of administrators, teachers, students and others in their efforts to create safe, secure and caring schools. The Alberta School Boards Association defines a "safe school" as follows.

"A safe and secure school is one that is physically, emotionally and psychologically safe characterized by:
- caring
- common values and beliefs
- respect for democratic values, rights and responsibilities
- respect for cultural diversity
- respect for law and order
- common social expectations
- clear and consistent behavioural expectations
- appropriate and positive role modeling by staff and students

- respect for individual differences
- effective anger management strategies
- community, family, student and staff involvement."[15]

COLLABORATION

A common theme of advisors on policy development is the emphasis placed on involving all groups affected by the policy. School boards should include students, all levels of staff, parents, and representatives of law enforcement, health care and social service agencies in formulating policy. The involvement generates ownership of and support for the policies approved.

POLICY REVIEW

Policies must reflect current circumstances and comply with current legislation. Schools should be encouraged to provide the board with periodic reports of the effectiveness of board policies. This can be achieved by including a Policy Initiation Form in the board's policy manual. Anyone affected by the policy is encouraged to submit suggestions for policy initiation, amendment or deletion. Another approach is to require administration to prepare reports on the effects of a certain policy. For example, since the introduction of the policy, has there been a decrease in the number or severity of violent incidents occurring in each school in the jurisdiction? A third approach is to have the board review its policies according to a schedule, which includes input from schools and school communities on whether or not the policy is achieving its desired effects.

The following policy review checklist comes from the Lions-Quest publication, *Working Toward a Safe School: Canadian Administrator's Guide*.

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[15] From *A Safe place: creating peaceful schools* (p. 16), by the Alberta School Boards Association, 1994, Edmonton, AB: Alberta School Boards Association. Reprinted with permission.

POLICY REVIEW CHECKLIST[16]

Refer to this checklist periodically to determine if appropriate policy measures are in place.

Who?

Representatives from all the following:

☐ Administrators
☐ Teachers
☐ Staff
☐ Students
☐ Parents and other caregivers
☐ Community representatives
☐ Other

What?

Standards of behaviour:

☐ Policies stated clearly
☐ School population informed
☐ Violations dealt with appropriately
☐ Productive, positive behaviours rewarded
☐ Appropriate consequences adopted

Security of school facilities and access routes:

☐ School facility
☐ Access routes
☐ Visitor screening
☐ Traffic patterns — internal/external
☐ Evacuation procedures
☐ Transportation routes
☐ Communication capabilities

Where?

All areas where students and staff are present:

☐ Classrooms
☐ Routes to and from school
☐ Play/recreation areas
☐ Lunchroom
☐ Corridors
☐ Restrooms
☐ Stairwells
☐ Immediate vicinity

When?

Periodic review:

☐ School opening
☐ New enrollments, transfer students
☐ Staff changes
☐ Change in facility
☐ Incidents involving drugs, alcohol or weapon possession

Why?

There is little time to think clearly when an emergency arises. Implementing a carefully designed safe school policy minimizes impulsive responses to situations. With members of the school community involved in the planning, practice and execution of procedures, the risk of injury to persons and damage to property is reduced, and the potential for safety is enhanced.

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[16] From *Working toward a safe school: Canadian administrator's guide* (p. 9), by L. L. Morgan, M. Laird, S. C. Keister & B. Ahrens, 1996, Waterloo, ON: Lions-Quest Canada. Reproduced with permission.

Policy Development: Procedures

School officials should also develop procedures applicable to each policy for dealing with the range of incidents that might occur in schools, including violent incidents which involve students, staff, volunteers or visitors. Such procedures enable staff and students to deal with incidents effectively, appropriately and fairly. These procedures should include the reporting of incidents to the proper authorities. Serious violent incidents must be reported to the police and possibly social services if child abuse is suspected. (See pages 8–9 for more on child abuse.) Records should also be kept of less-serious violations of approved codes of conduct for students. It is possible that non-criminal but serious incidents could result in civil action lawsuits. Accurate records of the incident and the school's response are required to ensure school officials acted reasonably under the circumstances and complied with board policy.

Zero Tolerance

Zero tolerance refers to those policies that treat minor and major incidents of violence with equal severity in order to send a strong message to potential violators. With the rights to education contained in the *School Act* and the constitutional implications of section 7 of the *Charter*, indicating that education is a constitutional right, terminating a student's education through expulsion is open to Ministerial review.

Zero tolerance should mean that all inappropriate behaviours are dealt with appropriately, based on the merits of each individual case, not that all problems result in the same consequence. No disruptive or hurtful behaviours should be excused or ignored. However, appropriate consequences are needed to respond appropriately to every violation of the code of conduct. (See Consequences, page 39.) Do what is best for individual students that balances his or her rights and responsibilities with the rights of the rest of the student body.

School administrators must retain the right to temporarily exclude a student from attending a school, class or program if his or her presence seriously threatens the safety of others, or jeopardizes the integrity of the institution. However, the formal exclusion of a student from school does not relieve the school jurisdiction of its responsibility to provide access to an education program to a resident student. School boards need to explore programming alternatives to traditional programs before they formally expel a student from the district. "The process of applying zero tolerance policies is complex. It requires a delicate legal and ethical balance between the rights of the individual to an education and due process, and the rights of the majority of students to a safe school environment."[17]

SCHOOL BOARD POLICY

Each school board must develop and adopt policy relevant to its unique situation, and consistent with current legislation and community expectations.

School-Based Policy

School policy must facilitate the implementation of board policy. School policy operationalizes board policy and guides the behaviour of everyone within the school community.

As with school board policy, school-level policy must be developed with input from students, staff, parents, school councils, and relevant community groups and businesses. Although board policy is often flexible, to allow schools to apply it as best meets their unique needs and circumstances, school-level policy must be directive enough to ensure consistent, fair and objective application. This does not preclude flexibility in selecting appropriate consequences for disruptive behaviour. The consequences may vary depending upon the student's age, degree of seriousness of the disruptive behaviour, and the past history and individual circumstances of the student.

PRINCIPLES

Incorporating guiding principles into policies can direct the actions and consequences resulting from the policy. What are the guiding principles or belief statements agreed to by all stakeholders? Examples of guiding principles are:

- the best educational interests of students are of paramount consideration
- promoting safe and caring schools and communities requires a multidisciplinary approach; combining the efforts of government, school boards, schools, students, parents, community members and agencies ensures schools are safe and caring

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[17] From "Zero avoidance," by I. MacDonald, 1996, *The ATA News*, 31(8), p. 7. Reprinted with permission.

- safe and caring schools promote the development of responsible, caring and respectful members of a just, peaceful and democratic society.

A safe school community is:
- orderly and purposeful
- free of physical and psychological harm
- respectful and sensitive to cultural diversity
- an environment of nonviolence.[18]

CODE OF CONDUCT

Every school should have a code of conduct as part of its student discipline policy. This code should be consistent with section 7 of the *School Act* and receive the approval of the school board.

> 7 Students
> A student shall conduct himself so as to reasonably comply with the following code of conduct:
>
> (a) be diligent in pursuing his studies;
> (b) attend school regularly and punctually;
> (c) co-operate fully with everyone authorized by the board to provide education programs and other services;
> (d) comply with the rules of the school;
> (e) account to his teachers for his conduct;
> (f) respect the rights of others.

To support section 7 of the *School Act*, section 28 was amended by the addition of subsection (7).

> 28(7) A board shall ensure that each student enrolled in a school operated by the board is provided with a safe and caring environment that fosters and maintains respectful and responsible behaviours.

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[18] From *Safe school communities: an information and policy guide for the prevention of violence* (p. 4), by S. Bareham & J.A. Clark, 1994, Vancouver, BC: British Columbia School Trustees Association. Reproduced with permission.

One Ontario Ministry of Education and Training publication suggests that school codes of behaviour:[19]

(a) be developed with students, staff, parents or guardians and the community
(b) state unequivocally that physical, verbal (oral or written), sexual or psychological abuse; bullying or discrimination on the basis of race, culture, religion, gender, language, disability, sexual orientation or any other attribute is unacceptable
(c) state that damage to property in the school environment (including school grounds, school buses) is unacceptable
(d) establish clear and fair consequences for unacceptable behaviour (where staff violate the code of behaviour, consequences will derive from the boards' existing personnel policies and procedures)
(e) be prominently displayed in the school; effectively communicated to all and understood by students, staff, parents or guardians and the community.

CONSEQUENCES

> *The children of today now love luxury. They have bad manners, contempt for authority, they show disrespect for adults and love to talk rather than work or exercise. They contradict their parents, chatter in front of company, gobble down food at the table and intimidate their teachers.*
>
> Socrates, 489–399 B.C.

Consequences for disruptive behaviour should be meaningful, age appropriate, progressive, flexible (allowing some individualization), enforceable, written and communicated to staff, students and parents. Students must view consequences as deterrents to misbehaviour. Unless students care about the privileges that are denied or consequences that are imposed, they will have little incentive to comply with the code of conduct. Students are as concerned about the fair and consistent application of consequences as they are about the consequences themselves. To maintain consistency of enforcement throughout the school, all members of the school community need to clearly understand and support the code of conduct.

School staff, in conjunction with students and parents, under the leadership of the principal, should identify appropriate consequences to be used in response to disruptive behaviour. Effective discipline should be a matter of learning, so consequences should be selected on the basis of "what we need to teach the child," rather than, "is this a severe enough punishment?" Punishment designed to inflict physical and/or emotional hurt deliberately; e.g., corporal punishment, has been forbidden by many school districts. Punishment of this nature may result in temporary compliance with school rules but it also develops hostility, resentment and often revenge. Some appropriate consequences may be temporarily unpleasant for offenders but the primary purpose is one of learning appropriate behaviours rather than punishment.

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[19] From *Violence-free school policy* (pp. 19–20), by the Ontario Ministry of Education and Training, 1994, Toronto, ON: Ontario Ministry of Education and Training. © Queen's Printer for Ontario, 1994. Reproduced with permission.

POSSIBLE CONSEQUENCES

The following list of consequences is not intended to be all inclusive or necessarily in an increasing order of severity. Appropriate consequences must be determined by each school staff to fit the unique circumstances of the school and the student, after consultation with students, parents and, if appropriate, community representatives. Possible consequences include:

- verbal warning — a reminder that a behaviour is inappropriate and an alternate strategy is agreed upon for future incidents
- verbal reprimand — a more serious verbal reminder with further consequences outlined in relation to mutually agreed upon alternative strategies for use by the student or teacher
- minor detention — loss of recess or part of a noon-hour privilege with small work assignment related to the effects of inappropriate behaviour on others
- major detention — detained after school or over noon hour for one or more days, or loss of other free-time privileges for one or more occasions with larger relevant work assignment related to developing more effective alternative strategies for use by the student
- phone call home — used in conjunction with most consequences to ensure parents are informed and involved
- formal interview with student — a scheduled private meeting to discuss issues with notes taken — may involve ongoing teacher-student counselling
- relocation — student temporarily relocated to a supervised location to complete specific course assignments
- formal removal — removal from a class with re-admittance based upon specific written conditions

- community programs — involving a student in a community service program as appropriate
- assigning restitution — yard clean up, removing graffiti, painting, repairing or replacing damaged property, etc., caused as a result of student behaviour
- interview with parents — should occur at many stages to ensure two-way communication; written notes may be important — share possible strategies with parents
- directed counselling — student is required to learn anger/behaviour management strategies and develop a behaviour plan with a designated person or behaviour support team
- student contract — signed agreement regarding behaviour, work habits, attendance or other areas of concern to remediate, with strategies and ongoing evaluation included
- removal of privileges — ineligible for extra-curricular groups, field trips, etc. until behaviour shows consistent improvement
- in-school suspensions — student does all required work in a supervised area away from other students
- suspension from school — temporary removal from course, program, class, school bus, school or school property for a specified period not exceeding 10 days; parents are notified and a meeting is held with the behaviour support team; terms for appropriate behaviour and/or contract are developed upon re-admittance
- expulsion to alternative program — student loses privilege of attending a school but is eligible to attend an alternative education program provided by the board, subject to terms of re-enrollment between the student, parent and board.

School staffs should develop procedures which effectively implement various consequences so that administration, other staff and parents are informed and involved. The rules of natural justice dictate that procedural fairness be evident. Students should be made aware of the code of conduct and the consequences for failing to comply, and have the opportunity to have their side of the situation heard and considered before consequences are decided.

LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS REGARDING OUT-OF-CLASS CONSEQUENCES

As school officials select and impose consequences for disruptive behaviour, certain legal requirements must be considered.

Exclusion or removal of a student from a classroom for an extended period of time and/or assigning him or her to an isolated space is a serious form of discipline. "Time-out" as a consequence for misbehaviour can be effective in decreasing the occurrence of negative behaviours, however it must be used appropriately. When considering removing a student from the classroom, it is essential to check and comply with school policy and guidelines.

Removing a student from class does not relieve the teacher of the responsibility to supervise or arrange for the supervision of that student. Teachers have a duty of care as discussed on page 7 of this manual. Fulfilling that duty means ensuring that a student removed from class or serving an in-school suspension must be adequately monitored. If the student suffers harm while outside his or her regular setting, school personnel might be found legally liable because of their negligence.

Each school should develop policy and procedures for the supervision of students who are removed from their regular learning environment. School board policy should cover the education program aspects of such situations. The behaviour and/or academic expectations placed upon these students should comply with school board and school policy, and school staff should monitor the situation to ensure the expectations are being met.

The physical location identified for out-of-class consequences must be adequate to its purpose. Some schools use a small room (without a locking door) adjacent to the general office.

The legal implications of a particular consequence must be considered when creating a school discipline plan. By doing so, school officials will fulfill their duty of care to students and properly impose appropriate consequences to develop responsible and respectful student behaviours.

EMPLOYEE CONDUCT

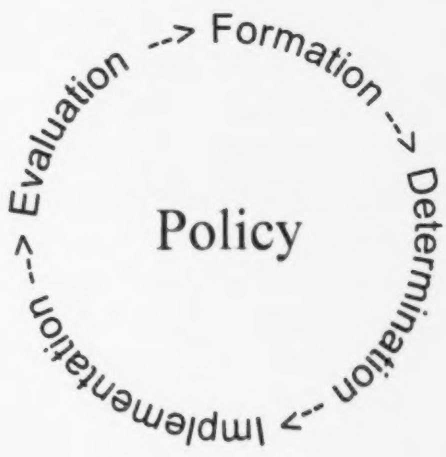
It is a reasonable expectation that staff and volunteers working in schools model appropriate language and behaviour to students. A number of school board policies should address these issues. Employees who fail to comply with expectations regarding language, behaviour, discrimination, use of alcohol and/or drugs, and/or respectful treatment of students and other staff are subject to disciplinary action. They may be subject to dismissal or other action authorized by board policy, the *School Act*, the *Teaching Profession Act*, *Teacher Growth Supervision and Evaluation* policy, the collective agreement, labour legislation, and/or *The Alberta Teachers' Association Code of Professional Conduct*. (See pages 27–28 for more on the *Code of Professional Conduct*.)

> *What you do speaks so loudly I cannot hear what you say.*
>
> Ralph Waldo Emerson, taken from *Familiar Quotations*, John Bartlett, 14th Edition.

POLICY DEVELOPMENT

Discipline policies, procedures and approved consequences should be reviewed regularly to ensure they comply with legislation, board policy and community standards.

As indicated by the diagram below, policy making is a cyclical process.[20]



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[20] From *Safe school communities: an information and policy guide for the prevention of violence* (p. 13), by S. Bareham & J.A. Clark, 1994, Vancouver, BC: British Columbia School Trustees Association. Reproduced with permission.

- Policy formation: information gathering, analysis, discussion and the development of options
- Policy determination: decisions are made about which options to follow
- Policy implementation: policy choice is translated into a series of actions
- Policy evaluation: the results of actions are compared to original objectives (ideally leading to policy review and reformulation, if necessary).

The following pages provide guidelines for policy development with specific examples relating to a safe and caring teaching and learning environment. The components of a policy are broad guidelines from which schools can plan their own programs, using a locally contextualized approach.

Guidelines for Policy Development

Education Programs and Services
SAFE AND CARING SCHOOLS

Policy development includes the following components.

Background
This part introduces and provides a history or rationale for the policy. This may include: a review of the issues necessitating the change, a description of the interests leading to an initiative, recognition of how the policy aligns with provincial or school board goals and directions, and the benefits. An example is:

Promoting a safe and caring school requires the support and assistance of all members of the school community. Our goal is to develop responsible, caring and respectful members of a just, peaceful and democratic society. Discipline is an essential part of a positive school climate. A positive school climate contributes to the prevention and reduction of misbehaviours in school. School principals and teachers, under the direction of the principal, are to maintain order and discipline in the school, on school grounds and during activities sponsored or approved by the board. School staff need to operate in a loco parentis role whereby they act in relation to students as responsible caring parents. As well, in exercising their authority under the School Act, staff must always consider the best educational interests and fundamental rights of all students.

Policy Statement
The statement should be written in future oriented and results-based language. It should be stated in positive terms and provide guidance and support for appropriate actions by all those affected in the efforts to promote safe and caring schools. An example is:

> *The board expects students and staff to model and reinforce socially responsible and respectful behaviours so that teaching and learning can take place in a safe and caring environment.*

Statute
This part identifies the related sections of the *School Act* and other statutes applicable to the policy; e.g., *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, Individual's Rights Protection Act, Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*. The statute in question both enables and limits the use of the policy. Use the original acts for all purposes of interpreting and applying the law. Copies of the *School Act* and *Charter* are available from the Queen's Printer Bookstore (780) 427–4952.

For example:

School Act
Preamble
WHEREAS the best educational interests of the student are the paramount considerations in the exercise of any authority under this Act; and

WHEREAS parents have a right and a responsibility to make decisions respecting the education of their children.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Interpretation

1(1) In this Act,

(f.01) "expel" means to remove a student

- *(i) from school,*
- *(ii) from one or more courses or education programs, or*
- *(iii) from riding in a school bus*

for a period of more than 10 school days in accordance with section 19.1.

(w.1) "suspend" means to remove a student

- *(i) from school,*
- *(ii) from one or more class periods, courses or education programs, or*
- *(iii) from riding in a school bus*

for a period of 10 school days or less in accordance with section 19.

Right of access to education

3(1) Every individual

- *(a) who at September 1 in a year is 6 years of age or older and younger than 19 years of age*

is entitled to have access in that school year to an education program in accordance with this Act.

Students

7 A student shall conduct himself so as to reasonably comply with the following code of conduct:

- *(a) be diligent in pursuing his studies;*
- *(b) attend school regularly and punctually;*
- *(c) co-operate fully with everyone authorized by the board to provide education programs and other services;*
- *(d) comply with the rules of the school;*
- *(e) account to his teachers for his conduct;*
- *(f) respect the rights of others.*

Teachers

13 A teacher while providing instruction or supervision must

- *(f) maintain, under the direction of the principal, order and discipline among the students while they are in the school or on the school grounds and while they are attending or participating in activities sponsored or approved by the board.*

Principals

15 A principal of a school must

- *(e) maintain order and discipline in the school and on the school grounds and during activities sponsored or approved by the board.*

Suspension

19(1) A teacher or a principal may suspend a student in accordance with subsection (2) or (3) if in the opinion of the teacher or principal

- *(a) the student has failed to comply with section 7, or*
- *(b) the student's conduct is injurious to the physical or mental well-being of others in the school.*

(2) A teacher may suspend a student from one class period.

(3) A principal may suspend a student

- *(a) from school,*
- *(b) from one or more class periods, courses or education programs, or*
- *(c) from riding in a school bus.*

(4) A principal may reinstate a student suspended under subsection (2) or (3).

(5) When a student is suspended under subsection (3), the principal shall

(a) forthwith inform the student's parent of the suspension,

(b) report in writing to the student's parent all the circumstances respecting the suspension, and

(c) if requested, provide an opportunity to meet with the student's parent, and the student if the student is 16 years of age or older, to discuss the reasonableness of the suspension.

(6) If the student is not to be reinstated within 5 school days of the date of the suspension, the principal shall

(a) forthwith inform the board of the suspension, and

(b) report in writing to the board all the circumstances respecting the suspension and the principal's recommendations,

and the student remains suspended until the board has made a decision under subsection (8).

(7) The principal may recommend that the board expel the student if

(a) the student has displayed an attitude of wilful, blatant and repeated refusal to comply with section 7, or

(b) the student's conduct is injurious to the physical or mental well-being of others in the school.

(8) The board shall within 10 school days of the date of the suspension

(a) reinstate the student, or

(b) expel the student from school in accordance with section 19.1.

(9) Before the board makes a decision under subsection (8), the student and the student's parent may make representations to the board with respect to the principal's recommendation to expel the student.

Expulsion

19.1(1) On considering the report provided to it under section 19(6)(b) and any representations made to it under section 19(9), the board may expel the student if

(a) the principal has recommended that the board expel the student, and

(b) the student has been offered another education program by the board.

(2) An expulsion must be for a period of more than 10 school days.

(3) When a student is expelled under this section, the board shall forthwith notify, in writing, the student's parent, and the student if the student is 16 years of age or older,

(a) of the expulsion, and

(b) of the right to request a review under section 104.

(4) The board may re-enrol a student who has been expelled.

Prohibited activities

21(1) No person shall

(a) disturb or interrupt the proceedings of a school,

(b) disturb or interrupt the proceedings of a school meeting or board meeting.

Responsibility to students

28(7) A board shall ensure that each student enrolled in a school operated by the board is provided with a safe and caring environment that fosters and maintains respectful and responsible behaviours.

Powers of boards

44(1) A board must

(e) make rules respecting the circumstances in which a student may be suspended or expelled and the circumstances in which an expelled student may be re-enrolled.

Other sections and acts:
s.17 School council
s.103 Appeal to board
s.104 Review by the Minister
s.105 Powers on review

Teaching Profession Act

Regulation (if applicable)
This part identifies the relevant regulations applicable to the policy in question; for example,

- *Alberta Education Policy: Review by the Minister (3.4.1)*
- *Teaching Quality Standard (Ministerial Order 016/97). Refer to section 1(3)b)*
- *Basic Education in Alberta (Ministerial Order 004/98). Refer to Student Learning Outcomes (9th bullet point)*
- *Student Record Regulation A.R. 71/99*
- *Teacher Growth, Supervision and Evaluation Policy 2.1.5. Refer to Procedure 14(a).*

Definitions
This part provides clarity by including operational definitions specific to the policy in question. Definitions should be clearly understood, not subject to distortion of intent and enhance the policy statement.

For example:

Safe and Caring School:
A safe and caring school is physically, emotionally and psychologically safe for students and staff. It is an environment wherein everyone is accorded respect and dignity, and their safety and well-being are paramount considerations.

Caring:
Watchful attention, concern, custody, diligence, direction; to be concerned with and attend to the needs of others.

Safe:
Untouched or not exposed to danger, secure from damage, harm or loss.

Secure:
Protected from unauthorized access.

School Community:
Includes students, school staff, school council, parents, community members and anyone else with ties to or interests in the neighbourhood school or school district. Community includes the same locality, such as the school building, playground and/or school's geographic boundary.

Procedures
This part outlines the steps needed to implement the policy by specifying who does what, how and in what order. Procedures can be either mandatory or discretionary. Use of the word "shall" or "must" indicates mandatory items while use of the word "may" or "should" indicates discretionary items. The procedures should help students and staff understand their roles, rights and responsibilities. The procedures should be developed and implemented in a fair, appropriate and consistent manner with the view to modelling and reinforcing socially responsible and respectful behaviours so that teaching and learning can take place in a safe and caring environment. An example is:

The school board shall:

- *ensure the best educational interests of the student are the paramount consideration in the exercise of their authority*
- *ensure all schools are safe and caring*
- *develop, implement and continually evaluate policy, programs and practices to prevent and respond to incidents that disrupt teaching and learning*

- *act in a manner that is legally, professionally and educationally sound.*

The school principal shall:

- *ensure that students in the school have the opportunity to meet the standards of education set by the Minister*
- *develop an action plan in consultation with students, staff, school council, police, community representatives and parents that:*
  - *provides data management and internal/external communications systems*
  - *clarifies roles and responsibilities of students, school staff, parents and community agencies to support safe and caring schools*
  - *establishes criteria for developing, implementing and evaluating violence prevention programs*
  - *provides crisis management and school disaster plans*
  - *encourages staff development and training.*

Teachers shall:

- *create and maintain environments that are conducive to student learning*
- *establish learning environments wherein students feel physically, psychologically, socially and culturally secure*
- *be respectful of students' human dignity*
- *seek to establish a positive professional relationship with students that is characterized by mutual respect, trust, harmony*
- *model beliefs, principles, values and intellectual characteristics outlined in the "Guide to Education, ECS to Grade 12" and programs of study, and guide students to do the same.*

School council members and/or parents shall:

- *have a right and responsibility to make decisions respecting the education of their children*
- *consult with the principal to ensure students in the school have the opportunity to meet the standards of education set by the Minister*
- *advise and consult with the principal on matters related to student conduct, discipline and consequences.*

Students shall:

- *demonstrate desirable personal characteristics, such as respect, responsibility, fairness, honesty, caring, loyalty and commitment to democratic ideals*
- *conduct themselves so as to reasonably comply with the following code of conduct:*
  - *be diligent in pursuing their studies*
  - *attend school regularly and punctually*
  - *comply fully with everyone authorized by the board to provide education programs and other services*
  - *comply with the rules of the school*
  - *account to their teachers for their conduct*
  - *respect the rights of others.*

Students will be afforded the following:

- *information on the code of conduct they are expected to comply to, with possible consequences for noncompliance*
- *opportunities to explain and present evidence on incidents*
- *decisions made as objectively as possible and based on all the facts presented.*

Consequences will be determined by each school staff to fit the unique circumstances of the school and student, in response to inappropriate behaviours. Appropriate consequences will be based on what the student can learn from the misbehaviour.

Consequences for noncompliance will range from:

- *verbal warning and/or reprimand*
- *minor and/or major detention*
- *interview and/or contract with student*
- *parent communication and/or meeting*
- *restitution and/or temporary removal from class*
- *counselling and/or referral for services*
- *suspension and/or expulsion to alternative education program.*

References

This part lists additional information applicable to the policy in question. This can include manuals, handbooks, documents, reports, other policies and regulations; for example,

- Alberta Learning:
  - *Supporting Safe, Secure and Caring Schools in Alberta* (1999)
  - *The Government of Alberta's 3 Year Plan for Education*
  - *School Capital Plan Manual* (May 1997; p. v of vii)
- Alberta School Boards Association:
  - *A Safe Place: Creating Peaceful Schools* (1994)
- Alberta Teachers' Association:
  - *Code of Professional Conduct.*

Section III: Violence Prevention

Long-term control of violence requires changes in beliefs, attitudes and values.

Gabor, 1995, p. 25.

Addressing violence in society requires the collaborative effort of entire communities, including schools. The education system is ideally situated to address the problem of violence from a preventative perspective and should take a leading role in such initiatives.

Resources which are directed at violence prevention are more beneficial to youth and society than are those directed toward dealing with its aftermath. Prevention programs should identify and address the root causes of violence and direct resources to help children and youth develop appropriate social skills, attitudes and behaviours. It should also be recognized that parents often need support and assistance if the desired changes are to be realized. Communities that co-ordinate the efforts of such agencies as schools, police, social services, arts groups, amateur sport groups, business organizations, churches and other groups working with youth will develop a consistent response to violence, present a non-violent model for conflict resolution, and more efficiently and effectively direct available resources toward violence prevention.

The partnerships formed in each community will be unique because of differing needs, resources and leadership, however violence prevention must be the ultimate goal of all these programs.

This section of *Supporting Safe, Secure and Caring Schools in Alberta* will help school staffs in their efforts to prevent violence, and develop and model prosocial, respectful and responsible behaviours in all those associated with teaching and learning. (See p. iii for principles of the Safe and Caring Schools initiative.)

One way to help staff determine the strengths and needs of a school is through an environmental scan. The Safe and Caring School Scan is included in Appendix 1, pages 122–131. This scan is designed to help staff determine their strengths and needs in promoting safe and caring schools. Nine components of the school's environment are examined. The analysis of the data will help school staffs review and focus their efforts in ensuring a safe, secure and caring school environment.

Prevention Programs

Things do not change; we change.

Henry David Thoreau

CRITERIA[21]

The following questions will help determine criteria for selecting or developing an effective violence prevention program.

- Does the program have an adequate base in theory and research?
- Does the program provide a comprehensive ECS to Grade12 curriculum or can it be integrated into the provincial curriculum?
- Does the program provide sufficient background information on how to use it effectively?
- Does the program involve the family and members of the community so messages are consistently reinforced outside the school?
- Does the program address the needs of students from a variety of cultures and with differing abilities?
- Will teachers find the program valuable and satisfying because the resources can be fully utilized and adapted to the needs of students and the community?
- Is the program cost efficient in the long term?
- Will students enjoy the program and are they involved in making decisions that affect them?
- Does the program include training for those implementing it and does it involve all members of the school community?

Early Intervention as Prevention

Research is clear — antisocial behaviours can be identified in very young children. As well, alternative behaviours are most easily taught to the young, when they first begin to experiment with various responses to situations.

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[21] From *Preventing violence: changing norms in school communities* (pp. 24–25), by the Comprehensive Health Education Foundation, 1997, Washington, DC: Comprehensive Health Education Foundation. Reproduced by permission from Altschul Group Corp., Evanston, IL, 60201.

Early intervention — education, counselling, family support — costs less, and comes with a greater payoff later.

Onstad, 1997, p. 58.

It is important to help young children develop skills which allow them to modify their own responses and cope successfully with the aggressive behaviour of others. "We have the ability to predict the developmental course of this behaviour pattern very accurately. We can identify at-risk children early in their school careers, which enables us to intervene before this behaviour pattern moves beyond our ability to remediate or attenuate it," says H. M. Walker.[22]

Policies

As indicated earlier, violence prevention in schools starts with effective policies. Policies developed by school boards and schools must comply with legislation and reflect the principles consistent with supporting safety and security in the school. Section II: Governance — Policy Development will be helpful when reviewing current policies and procedures to ensure an appropriate and adequate legislative base supports the efforts of the school and community to establish and/or maintain a safe, secure and caring school environment.

Leadership

Leadership expectations and behaviors are powerful factors in creating a climate that rejects violence.

Hill & Hill, 1994, p. xii.

The school principal is in the best position to have the greatest influence on the attitudes and behaviours of everyone in the school community. As a leader, the principal sets the tone for the entire school, models behaviours that encourage and support other staff members, and helps them develop positive interactions with students. The job of principal is complex because it combines the skill of effective management with the equally important ingredients of educational and inspirational leadership.[23] Under the leadership of an effective principal, a safe, secure and caring school will develop which promotes the understanding of different cultures, commitment to peace and social justice, the development of skills necessary for getting along well with others and being responsible citizens, respect for human rights and the building of healthy relationships.

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[22] From "Anti-social behavior in school," by H. M. Walker, 1993, *The Journal of Emotional and Behavioral Problems*, 2(1), p. 23. Copyright (1993) by PRO-ED, Inc. Reprinted by permission.

[23] From *Working toward a safe school: Canadian administrator's guide* (p. 28), by L. L. Morgan, M. Laird, S. C. Keister & B. Ahrens, 1996, Waterloo, ON: Lions-Quest Canada. Reproduced with permission.

Staff as Role Models

The principal within the school is the central factor in establishing a positive cultural identity or school climate.

Hill & Hill, 1994,
p. 27.

To establish a school environment of emotional and physical safety, it is essential that staff members model appropriate behaviours by demonstrating caring and support for each other and their students. High expectations of appropriate behaviour, irrespective of gender or racial, cultural or ethnic background, are established and maintained. The adults in the school serve as positive role models for students when they resolve conflicts peacefully in an atmosphere of mutual respect.[24] Staff members model what they want others to become.

Physical Environment

School leaders are responsible for creating a safe educational environment in which learning thrives.

Buckner & Flanary,
1996, p. 46.

The physical environment of the school is an important area to consider for violence prevention and safety enhancement. The location of the school may have safety implications. Nearby industry could pose a hazard (explosion, noxious chemicals, heavy equipment, traffic). Safety plans should consider such factors. Nearby businesses should be consulted regarding concerns about students. Co-operating with businesses shows the school to be a concerned community agency and these businesses may be important information sources regarding student activities and truancy. If students are aware of this school-business co-operation, they will be discouraged from inappropriate behaviour. The school and business establishments will also be in a position to forewarn each other regarding violence which may start in one location and spill over to the other.

School buildings must be secure. Most schools have alarm systems that should be checked regularly to ensure proper operation. The security of school equipment and personal belongings is also a consideration. School staff should make a concerted effort to look after school equipment, ensure it is used properly and repair or replace hazardous equipment. Such actions demonstrate pride and ownership in the school and facilities, and develop the same in students.

Schools need to be clean, attractive and welcoming. They should be well-lit and supervised adequately so that no unsafe areas are ignored. No area of the school should be open only to certain students or be under the control of certain groups.

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[24] Adapted from *Working toward a safe school: Canadian administrator's guide* (p. 28), by L. L. Morgan, M. Laird, S. C. Keister & B. Ahrens, 1996, Waterloo, ON: Lions-Quest Canada. Reproduced with permission.

Safe schools are ones where values become an integral part of the curriculum.

Justice Institute of British Columbia, 1997, p. 27.

Allowing the dividing up or claiming of territory in the school runs counter to the establishment of a safe, secure and caring environment. It violates the very principles the school is trying to develop in students and cannot be accepted.

The school grounds and parking lots must also be safe places for students and staff. Safety audits should be done and adequate supervision and surveillance provided.

Students who damage school property and/or equipment must be subject to the code of conduct and appropriate consequences. The procedures for dealing with vandalism should ensure quick removal of graffiti and repair of broken windows or doors. Acts of vandalism often spawn other rebellious behaviour. The belief that should be predominant among staff and students in the school is, "This is our school. We are proud of it and we won't tolerate it being vandalized."

Evaluating Violence Prevention Programs

EVALUATING PROGRAMS

One survey on violence prevention indicates it is difficult to state with conviction which types of violence prevention or intervention strategies are most effective. However, given the amount of information and research currently available, there is the potential to develop a new generation of programs. A new generation of programs should:

- provide an overview of the underlying rationale and goals of different interventions, as well as of specific outcomes that have been used to measure program effectiveness
- identify programs and processes that have been effective in achieving desired outcomes, and the key elements of program content, format and implementation that contribute to this success
- examine the potential of violence prevention programs for intervening in different settings, among different populations of youth

- provide a basis for recommending next steps for the development, implementation and evaluation of programs, as well as a framework for setting evaluation standards and clarifying intervention outcomes in future work.[25]

Evaluation of violence prevention programs has been limited. The pressing concerns surrounding increases in violence among youth and the need to intervene have overshadowed careful attention to evaluation designs.[26]

Ideally, program evaluation should be designed prior to program implementation.[27] Measurable outcomes and evaluation models are needed to determine program effectiveness and develop the next steps to enhance the program. Qualitative and anecdotal reports are a few examples of evidence to support program effectiveness. One example is to provide evidence from those in the program — students, teachers, peer mediators, school administrators, health providers, volunteers — that shows they are united in their efforts to promote safe schools.

The Alberta Teachers' Association

SAFE AND CARING SCHOOLS PROJECT

The ATA's Safe and Caring Schools (SACS) project is a comprehensive violence prevention program aimed at encouraging socially responsible and respectful behaviours. Resources are being developed for students, teachers, parents and other adults in the community who work with students outside of school. The project began in 1996 with funding from the Minister of Education and continues through the Minister of Learning's Safe and Caring Schools initiative and will continue until at least 2001. Other partners and financial supporters of The ATA's SACS project include The Muttart Foundation, Lions Clubs of Alberta and Alberta Community Development.

GOAL

The goal of the ATA's Safe and Caring Schools project is to encourage school practices which model and reinforce socially responsible and respectful behaviours so that learning and teaching can take place in a safe and caring environment.

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[25] From *Violence prevention for young adolescents: a survey of the state of the art* (p. 56), by R. Wilson-Brewer, S. Cohen, L. O'Donnell & I. F. Goodman, 1991, a paper prepared for the 1990 conference "Violence Prevention for Young Adolescents," Newton, MA: Education Development Center, Inc. Reproduced with permission.

[26] Ibid., p. 56.

[27] Ibid., p. 56.

PHILOSOPHY

The emphasis of the project is to build respect and responsibility, and teach the knowledge, skills and attitudes required to resolve conflicts peacefully. The project impacts a child's total environment. The project's philosophy is:

- children develop non-violent values and behaviours when non-violence is taught and reinforced consistently by the important adults in their lives
- young people learn to apply safe and caring values to all aspects of their lives when these values are integrated into the school curriculum and reinforced throughout the school, home and community
- children need to take responsibility for regulating their own behaviour
- adults influence children's behaviours through example
- all adults in the community are responsible for the community's children.

OBJECTIVES

The project targets adults as well as students because it is through the appropriate behaviour of adults that children learn to behave appropriately. To implement the project's philosophy, adults will:

- provide consistent behavioural expectations throughout the school, home and community
- model, support and reinforce these same expectations at home, in school and in the community
- integrate safe and caring values across the curriculum
- view incidents of misbehaviour as opportunities to teach social skills
- always respond to misconduct when it occurs, and respond in ways that maintain the rights and dignity of all concerned
- empower children to take responsibility for regulating their own behaviour
- give children the opportunity to resolve problems caused by their own behaviour
- encourage students, through example, to show self-discipline and an ethic of caring.

PROGRAMS

To meet these objectives, the ATA's SACS project has developed programs in four areas:

- integrating knowledge, skills and attitudes related to conflict resolution and prosocial development into all levels of the Alberta curriculum, ECS to Grade 12
- creating professional development opportunities for teachers and others
- developing and implementing resources designed to foster a safe and caring school culture
- facilitating complementary programs in the community.

CURRICULUM INTEGRATION

At the elementary level, the ATA, with approval from the Curriculum Standards Branch of Alberta Learning, designed *Toward a Safe and Caring Curriculum — ATA Resources for Integration: ECS to Grade 6*. This program is unique in that it integrates violence prevention concepts into the Alberta programs of study for elementary schools. It is divided into five topics:

- Building a Safe and Caring Classroom
- Developing Self-Esteem
- Respecting Diversity and Preventing Prejudice
- Managing Anger and Dealing with Bullying
- Working it Out Together.

A puppet, *Niska*, is used in the primary grades for this program.

The junior and senior high program includes a compilation of teachers' best SACS strategies and learning activities that integrate safe and caring concepts into the curriculum. *Teachers' Best* is catalogued by subject and grade.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Professional development workshops for teachers and other adults who interact with students, include:

- a teacher inservice program for the elementary curriculum resource *Toward a Safe and Caring Curriculum*
- workshops for junior and senior high school teachers on the SACS philosophy, behaviour management strategies, teaching strategies and learning activities
- workshops for community members designed to complement Safe and Caring School programs in the school.

Relevant issues and topics are researched and the findings are condensed into practical articles and booklets. For up-to-date information, visit the ATA Home Page (http://www.teachers.ab.ca) and click on Special Projects to reach the SACS Project Home Page.

SCHOOL CULTURE

A document describing the attributes of a safe and caring school, entitled *Toward a Safe and Caring School,* is under development with extensive input from members of school communities and other stakeholders in education. A team of educational experts will develop assessment instruments for schools based on the attributes document. The assessment document will allow schools to identify their individual strengths and weaknesses. Resources will be catalogued, and where necessary, developed to facilitate school improvement in each of the attribute areas. *Principals' Best* is a compilation of principals' best SACS strategies and extra-curricular program guides for:

- peer education
- volunteer mentorship
- peer support
- peer mediation
- classroom meetings.

COMMUNITY PROGRAM

Toward a Safe and Caring Community grew out of the belief that safe and caring programming within the community is necessary to impact students' attitudes and behaviour both inside and outside school. This program consists of a series of five, 2½-hour workshops for adults and older teens held approximately once every second month throughout the school year. It is designed to help all adults who are important in children's lives (parents, teachers, coaches, youth group leaders, music instructors) model and reinforce positive social behaviour among students, whether it be at school, at home or in the community.

The ATA invited the Alberta Lions to become partners in *Toward a Safe and Caring Community* because of the Lions' strong and committed community involvement with youth. The Lions-Quest violence prevention program, *Working it Out* provided a partial framework for the development of the ATA's elementary resource, *Toward a Safe and Caring Curriculum — ATA Resources for Integration: ECS to Grade 6*, which was designed to complement the Lions-Quest program, *Skills for Growing*.

The ATA and the Lions are encouraging Safe and Caring Community action committees to initiate discussion on violence prevention in the community, identify community needs in this area, gather resources, and implement and evaluate programs to meet those needs.

A publicity package entitled *Who Cares?* which includes a video, CD-ROM, brochure and poster has been developed to help promote the community program and workshop series. The video and CD-ROM are available on loan from any public or separate school, public library or Lions Club in the province.

PROJECT EVALUATION

A formal evaluation of the ATA's SACS project will be conducted by The Muttart Foundation at one or more junior high schools and all of their feeder elementary schools. The Muttart Foundation has provided a grant to assist the ATA in completing the development of *Toward a Safe and Caring Curriculum — ATA Resources for Integration: ECS to Grade 6* and is also funding an evaluation of the curriculum resource.

Bullies and Victims

Usually, bullies harass others to assert control. They establish and exercise power over their victims. Direct bullying, including threats and physical assaults, is more common among boys. Often, bullies physically harass boys and girls in an overt display of aggression. Male bullies are often bigger and stronger than their victims. Traditionally, girls have used more subtle and indirect forms of harassment with psychological, emotional and social implications. Girls may slander, spread rumours, intentionally exclude someone, manipulate friendships, verbally abuse and more recently, physically assault or threaten their victims.

With a suitable intervention program, it is possible to dramatically reduce bully/victim problems in schools.

Olweus, 1996, p. 22.

Research indicates bullies have a strong need for power and dominance; they seem to enjoy subduing others and being in control. Many bullies have been reared under family conditions that foster hostility. They may have experienced a lack of warmth and acceptance, inconsistent discipline ranging from permissiveness to excessive physical punishment and been subject to violent emotional outbursts. The axiom "violence begets violence" seems to be supported. Youngsters who are aggressive and bully others have an increased risk of engaging in other antisocial problem behaviours as they get older. One study found that nearly 60 per cent of boys who were characterized as bullies in Grades 6–9 were convicted of at least one crime by the time they reached the age of 24 and nearly 40 per cent had three or more convictions by that age.[28]

The tendency to experience future problems applies to victims as well. The typical victims are more anxious and insecure than students in general. They are often cautious, sensitive and quiet. When they are the target of aggressive behaviour, they commonly react by crying when they are young and by withdrawal as they get older. Older victims are more likely to be depressed and have poor self-esteem than other people. One researcher classifies another group of victims as the "provocative victim." People in this group are anxious and aggressive, and their actions result in conflicts with adults and rejection by their peers. They are sometimes labeled hyperactive.[29] They may provoke other students, acting in ways which will cause rejection by peers. Whether or not the annoying or upsetting behaviour is intended to cause rejection, the provocative victim then complains of mistreatment by other students.

Bullying creates an atmosphere of fear for all children, not just the victim. Children who see another child being bullied may be reluctant to interfere or tell adults for fear that the bully will try to get even with them.[30] Some children will even join in and harass the victim to avoid becoming the next target. These attitudes and behaviours must be changed. The silent majority of students who are witnesses to bullying can play a significant role in reducing and even eliminating bullying behaviour.

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[28] From "Bully/victim problems at school: facts and effective intervention," by D. Olweus, 1996, *Reclaiming Children and Youth, Journal of Emotional and Behavioral Problems*, 5(1), p. 19. Copyright (1996) by PRO-ED, Inc. Reprinted by permission.

[29] Ibid., p. 18.

[30] From *Bullying: what you can do about it — a guide for upper elementary students and their parents* (p. 14), by The ATA Safe and Caring Schools Project, The Alberta Teachers' Association, 1997, Edmonton, AB: The Alberta Teachers' Association. Reproduced with permission.

Witnesses

Research suggests that between eight and 14 per cent of students are bullies, and between five per cent and 11 per cent are victims. This means that at least 75 per cent of students make up the silent majority that often serve as witnesses to bullying incidents but choose not to get involved. This large group of students must be recruited into programs to eliminate bullying or peer harassment. Bullies and victims need to receive specific help in developing new skills, strategies, attitudes and behaviours. So do students who are witnesses.

When it comes to designing effective programs, students tend to retain more information if adults tell them they can use it to help a friend. Witnesses must be convinced of the importance of intervention, not as snitchers against the bully, but as protectors or compassionate supporters of the victim. They must learn that it is the right thing to do to come to the assistance of a fellow student who is experiencing difficulty. Successful anti-bullying programs assist all students in developing intervention skills to resolve conflicts and defuse bullying situations. All students must feel confident that the adults in the school are ready, willing and able to intervene in such situations. In schools where the silent majority of students become active participants in an anti-bullying program, there is a redistribution of power from the few to the many, a reduction in fear, a safer school environment and a more compassionate, inclusive school culture.

To bully proof a school, the staff and school community must support the process. Implementing appropriate skill development programs for bullies, victims and witnesses will generate student support for a harassment-free environment and provide a more safe and caring school. These programs must be reviewed and renewed regularly.

Pages 107–108 of this manual list some useful resources for schools in their efforts to develop an environment free from bullying and harassment.

Other Violence Prevention Programs

Furthermore, an increased sense of duty, responsibility and concern for others was experienced by peer mediators.

Walker, 1995, pp. 35–36.

PEER MEDIATION

There are many mediation programs which provide students and adults with opportunities to resolve disagreements in a safe and caring manner. During mediation, with the assistance of an objective facilitator, the disputing parties can listen effectively to each other, identify underlying problems, explore various alternatives, and decide on and commit to an agreed upon approach to resolving the conflict.

Peer-mediation programs utilize specifically trained students to mediate minor disputes between other students in the school. Students involved in this process, either as mediators or disputants, learn new ways of handling conflicts. Peer mediation is not about discovering who is right or wrong. Instead, students are encouraged to move beyond the immediate conflict and learn how to get along with each other. Mediators ask the disputing students to tell their stories and ask questions for clarification. Then, they help students identify ways to resolve the conflict.

The following lists identify the steps in the process and the ground rules that must be agreed to by the disputants.

Mediation Steps:
- agree upon the ground rules
- each student tells his or her story
- verify the stories
- discuss the stories
- generate solutions
- discuss solutions
- select a solution
- sign a contract.

Ground Rules — Participants should be willing to:
- solve the problem
- tell the truth
- listen without interrupting
- be respectful
- take responsibility for carrying out the agreement
- keep the situation confidential.

Some of the real benefits of a peer mediation program are the attitudes it produces. Students begin to feel empowered. They believe they are able to take care of each other and as a result are better able to take care of themselves. Peer-buddy and peer-tutoring programs have been outgrowths of successful peer-mediation programs. Students helping students provides a strong counterforce to violence in schools.

POLICE/SCHOOL PARTNERSHIP PROGRAMS

The comments of both the school administrators and the police officer about their working relationship were overwhelmingly positive.

Ryan, Mathews & Banner, 1994, p. 7.

Programs involving police officers as school liaison workers are in place in Alberta. It is important that these assignments be treated as much more than law enforcement in the school. Effective police/school liaison programs involve the police officer in many aspects of the school program. Police officers present sessions to students on such topics as bullying, drugs, youth gangs, suicide, family violence, assaults (sexual and non-sexual), the *Young Offenders Act*, Crime Stoppers and others. They can conduct school safety audits; assist with supervision on field trips, extra-curricular and/or intramural programs; or participate in extra-curricular programs.

When police liaison officers are involved in the everyday activities of the school, there are many benefits. Students change their views about police and begin to see police officers as caring adults, role models and advocates. Students learn to trust police officers and are more likely to report violent incidents to them. There is an improved understanding of the role law enforcement plays in a free and democratic society. In 1998, the Alberta Association of School Resource Officers (AASRO) was established to provide police officers with additional resources to enhance their ability to work with young people in school systems. AASRO provides training to young people on issues related to youth and the law, and additional resources for educators on topics related to law enforcement. AASRO encourages contact from schools regarding services they provide. For information on AASRO, call (780) 421–3441.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT AND SUPPORT

> *A safe school plan is no better than the level of community support for it.*
>
> Stephens, 1995, p. 51.

A safe, secure and caring school environment needs community involvement and support if it is to be successfully maintained. For a community to be supportive of a school's violence prevention program, it must be involved in the planning, implementation and evaluation of the program. Community agencies and representatives may not appreciate requests for support of programs that someone else has developed and implemented without some opportunity for input. The issues of credibility, ownership, appropriate standards and enforcement should be addressed during the developmental stage. School safety is all about partnerships and collaboration.

Parents should be the first community representatives approached for input. Supportive parents are an important resource in promoting safe schools and ensuring the success of their children. Successful school administrators enlist more than parental support — they seek parental participation and involvement. Every community is unique and school staffs need to determine how best to elicit input and support from their communities. However, many schools have found that the successful implementation and maintenance of a safe, secure and caring school environment have been as a direct result of community commitment and support.

Section VI, Support Organizations and Agencies, pages 89–96, supports school-community collaboration. Community agencies and schools can accomplish a great deal more for students and their families if they work together and share resources.

> *Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can act together to change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has.*
>
> Margaret Mead

Effective school programs can result in corresponding community programs. Such programs are made possible when the following elements are part of the school's violence prevention program:[31]

- a shared definition of the problems/issues
- a unified vision for change
- a developmentally complete series of prevention programs
- a high level of co-ordination and co-operation among service providers, and concerned community members and agencies
- skillful mobilization of human and financial resources.

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[31] From *Communities that care: action for drug abuse prevention* (p. xiv), by J. D. Hawkins & R. F. Catalano, Jr., 1992, San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Publishers. Reprinted with permission.

Resources directed to violence prevention are more beneficial to youth and society than those directed toward dealing with its aftermath. The highest priority for the creation and/or maintenance of a safe, secure and caring school environment must be the prevention of violence.

COLLABORATION

Youth crime is best addressed through the collaborative efforts of students, teachers, parents, community members, police, government and community agencies. The National Crime Prevention Council (1997) states, "The criminal justice system alone cannot solve the complex social problems that lie behind much youth involvement in crime. Solutions need to be found in alternative approaches that improve the conditions in the environment where young people live, learn and grow. This means forging strong working partnerships among government, social services, parents, schools, police, institutions and the private sector."

Task forces and researchers across North America indicate that safe schools share the following characteristics:

- a climate which nurtures caring and peaceful relationships
- teaching and learning which demonstrates understanding and sensitivity for cultural diversity
- staff and students who feel safe from physical and psychological harm
- staff and students who feel that they are part of a community.[32]

The building and sustaining of safe schools involve:

- a positive behaviour program that recognizes the exemplary acts of students
- resources that enable teachers to organize extra-curricular activities to promote a team environment among students
- student involvement in developing a behaviour plan
- opportunities for students to develop and apply critical decision-making and conflict-resolution skills
- school programs that recognize community service as a valuable contribution by students

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[32] From *Actions to promote safe and caring schools in Alberta: a discussion paper for consultation* (p. 8), by Alberta Education, 1998, Edmonton, AB: Alberta Education.

- curricula that integrate skills that students need for peaceful and co-operative problem solving.[33]

The process of establishing effective violence-prevention programs requires the well-informed, collaborative efforts of all education partners to ensure schools prevent violence and are safe communities. It also requires a balance — balancing the legal requirements with what is educationally and professionally sound is the challenge for school community members.

OUTCOMES

What are the outcomes of the policies, programs and practices developed to promote safe schools? What knowledge, skills and attitudes are to be demonstrated as result of a safe schools program? By knowing the intended outcomes, school staff can define, design, deliver and document instruction and assessment in terms of the intended outcomes. Once the outcomes are determined, programs can be developed according to what students need to demonstrate at the end.

For example, one student learning outcome identified in the provision of basic education in Alberta is that students will:

> *. . . demonstrate desirable personal characteristics, such as respect, responsibility, fairness, honesty, caring, loyalty and commitment to democratic ideas.*

An outcome for teachers identified in Alberta Learning's policy on *Teacher Growth, Supervision and Evaluation* is:

Teachers create and maintain environments that are conducive to student learning. Teachers establish learning environments wherein students feel physically, psychologically, socially and culturally secure. They are respectful of students' human dignity and seek to establish a positive professional relationship with students that is characterized by mutual respect, trust and harmony. They model beliefs, principles, values and intellectual characteristics outlined in the guide to education and programs of study, and guide students to do the same.

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[33] From *Actions to promote safe and caring schools in Alberta: a discussion paper for consultation* (p. 8), by Alberta Education, 1998, Edmonton, AB: Alberta Education.

Attempts to provide effective safe school initiatives are more successful when the co-ordinated efforts of school staff are guided by sound policies, under the leadership of the principal, in collaboration with community support agencies. Through the well-informed efforts of all education partners, we can ensure our schools are safe and our children are cared for.

SAFE AND CARING SCHOOLS: OUTCOMES

The following outcomes were developed from the nine components included in the Safe and Caring School Scan discussed on page 51 and found in Appendix 1, pages 122–131. Following an analysis of each component, school staff can evaluate the effectiveness of current programs and practices, and/or set directions for future goals.

SAFE AND CARING SCHOOLS: OUTCOMES

A
Caring and Respectful Environment

- ✓ parents and students regard the school as a caring and inviting place
- ✓ staff members care about students and celebrate their successes
- ✓ students treat each other with respect
- ✓ staff identify and deal appropriately with all incidents of bullying and harassment
- ✓ the school is a clean, well-maintained and welcoming place
- ✓ all students are given leadership roles on a regular basis

B
Safe and Secure Environment

- ✓ student records and files are secure against unauthorized access
- ✓ school buildings and grounds are adequately supervised
- ✓ regular safety audits are completed of school facilities and grounds
- ✓ effective prevention and intervention minimize thefts and/ or acts of vandalism
- ✓ staff receive emergency office support when needed
- ✓ staff receive information about potentially violent students on a need-to-know basis

C
Effective Discipline Procedures

- ✓ the students' code of conduct is effective
- ✓ teachers are consistent in their handling of student misbehaviours
- ✓ students who are removed from classrooms are adequately supervised
- ✓ students receive a fair hearing if accused of misbehaviour
- ✓ teachers use a range of consequences appropriate to student misbehaviours
- ✓ parents are involved in developing and reviewing the student code of conduct

D
Focus on Teaching and Learning

- ✓ teachers focus on teaching excellence
- ✓ students with special needs receive individualized attention
- ✓ teachers set high expectations for student learning
- ✓ classrooms are dynamic centres of learning
- ✓ student competencies in reading are developed
- ✓ teachers respond to the different learning styles and expressions of intelligence of students

E
Equity, Fairness and Tolerance

- ✓ students are treated with dignity and respect
- ✓ the same standard of conduct and consequences applies equally to all students
- ✓ all students understand the school norms
- ✓ community leaders are consulted on student conduct matters
- ✓ jokes reflecting negatively on other individuals or groups are not tolerated
- ✓ diverse cultures are respected and valued

F

Supportive Strategies Used

- ✓ a student mentorship program is in place
- ✓ the school's code of conduct is understood by students
- ✓ students with special needs receive the programs and services they require
- ✓ student and staff team spirit is developed
- ✓ students receive counselling when needed
- ✓ the school accesses community agencies to support students as needed

G

Behaviour Management and Skills Development

- ✓ students who need it are taught how to behave appropriately
- ✓ students demonstrate positive social skills
- ✓ students with emotional/behavioural difficulties receive programs and services
- ✓ students with problems are referred for consultation and/or assessment
- ✓ parents receive support and training in working with children
- ✓ students use problem-solving skills
- ✓ discipline focuses on student learning and skill development

H

Staff Development, Roles and Relationships

- ✓ teachers and support staff access professional development opportunities
- ✓ staff members model appropriate attitudes and behaviours
- ✓ leadership is provided by administrators when dealing with behaviour and academic concerns
- ✓ all contributions of staff members are valued
- ✓ staff care about each other and work as a team

I

Positive School-Community Relationships

- ✓ school staff have an effective working relationship with community agencies
- ✓ an active public relations program is in place
- ✓ members of the community are involved in reviewing school discipline polices and procedures
- ✓ the school's emergency response plans are co-ordinated with the municipality
- ✓ school staff participate in the larger school community
- ✓ community involvement in the school is ongoing

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Section IV: Intervention — Crisis Response and Follow-Up

> *Young people look to adults to protect them and provide safe and secure environments whether at home or in school. When we fail to provide it young people become fearful and uncertain and eventually learn not to rely on adults.*
>
> Mathews, 1993, p. 47.

This section facilitates quick, effective, legal, co-ordinated responses to situations ranging from minor disruptions to serious violent incidents or other emergencies. If the violence prevention programs developed and implemented at the school are successful, the number of incidents requiring intensive intervention are minimized.

Schools that set high expectations for student and staff behaviour, respond quickly and appropriately to minor infractions, emphasize achievement, and provide a clean, safe and welcoming environment have fewer crisis situations. Prevention is the best defence against crisis situations. Crisis situations vary from minor disruptions to extreme disasters. Appropriate plans include an entire range of responses.

School crisis response plans and disaster plans for dealing with violent and emergency situations must be in place to guide responses, co-ordinate action and minimize the damages resulting from any crisis or disaster. The intervention and follow-up components of such plans are addressed in this section. The communication process is covered in Section V, pages 78–88. A comprehensive crisis response plan encompasses all these components.

Minor Disruptions and Misbehaviours

All schools deal regularly with minor disruptions during day-to-day operations. Ongoing discipline processes and effective classroom management skills make routine work of most of these misbehaviours. The school's code of conduct for students and the accompanying consequences approved as part of the school's discipline procedures provide guidance to staff. The nature and number of violent incidents increase when there is ineffective or inconsistent application and administration of discipline in a school. School rules and consequences must be in place, communicated to students, staff and parents, and followed in a fair consistent manner.

Appropriate interventions in these day-to-day disruptions provide a strong component of the school's overall violence prevention program. Section II, pages 29–50, emphasizes the need for comprehensive school board and school-based policy in this area. Guidance in the development, implementation, review and/or revision of such policy is also provided. The effectiveness of staff responses to crisis situations depends upon the policies and procedures in place, and the advance preparedness of staff to implement those procedures.

Crisis Situations in Schools

Experience is not what happens to you; it is what you do with what happens to you.

Aldous Huxley

By definition, a crisis is an extraordinary and unpredictable event. It is a sudden, unanticipated, often arbitrary event that develops quickly and has the potential for serious consequences. Conflict-based crises resulting from serious threats or acts of violence against persons and/or property are usually intentional and have one or more perpetrators. A disaster is a devastating catastrophic event that can threaten life, produce injury and create distressful experiences. A crisis becomes a disaster when the school's resources to deal with the crisis become overwhelmed.

Crises occur so quickly that there is not sufficient time to plan and organize the school's response at the time. Advance planning is a necessity.

CRISIS RESPONSE PLAN

The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy.

Martin Luther King Jr.

Developing school-based plans for responding to crisis situations is essential. If your school experienced a crisis, would you be able to answer these questions?

- Who activates the school's plan?
- Who is responsible for all communications?
- What are the different roles in the crisis management process?
- What community agencies, if any, are ready to provide assistance and what type of assistance is available?
- How is communication with the rest of the staff and students to occur?
- If the school has to be evacuated, where does everyone go and how do they get there?
- How are the relevant facts going to be made public?
- When should the police and/or other community agencies be involved?
- What codes have been agreed to and will everyone respond accordingly?

The answers to such questions must be provided in a comprehensive, well-communicated and rehearsed crisis management plan. This plan should be developed by those who would direct the various community responses during an emergency or crisis at the school. With input from the staff, students, parents, police, fire department, health unit, appropriate community agencies and representatives of municipal service providers, the planning team develops procedures for dealing with the range of crisis situations that could occur at the school. Such procedures enable staff and students to deal with emergencies effectively, in an organized way. The planning team should be familiar with the physical layout of the school, available equipment and community resources. A comprehensive plan facilitates appropriate responses to each situation. Sample response plans to specific crises are included in Appendix 2, pages 132–146.

The following elements should be part of a comprehensive crisis management plan.

DEVELOPING A COMPREHENSIVE CRISIS MANAGEMENT PLAN

1. Gather preliminary data:
    - audits, surveys
    - site maps
    - environmental scan
    - transportation means and routes
2. Develop preventative measures in response to data collected:
    - physical facilities
    - security and supervision
    - curricular and extra-curricular activities
    - discipline procedures
3. Establish communications:
    - (i) internal
        - notification of crisis
        - information dissemination
        - coded messages
    - (ii) external
        - notification to parents
        - use of media
        - response to media
    - (iii) command centre
        - who is in charge?
        - where is it located?
        - when is it in operation?
        - what is the message?
    - (iv) roles and responsibilities
        - administration
        - teachers
        - support staff and school council
4. Determine community support agency co-operation and resources:
    - police
    - disaster services
    - social services
    - health care services
    - mental health agencies
    - service clubs
    - town or city services
    - others (depending upon community)
5. Plan intervention strategies:
    - appropriate crisis intervention teams
    - preferred strategies identified
    - acceptable alternative actions
    - rehearsed by staff
6. Set appropriate consequences:
    - in-school
    - out-of-school
    - alternative programs
    - legal recourses (criminal, civil)
7. Develop debriefing and reporting procedures:
    - (i) ensuring accuracy of data
    - (ii) completing records and reports required
    - (iii) informing and involving authorities as necessary
8. Establish follow-up programs and services to rebuild trust and confidence in the system, and a sense of safety and security:
    - (i) for victims
    - (ii) for witnesses (all those affected by the crisis)
    - (iii) for the perpetrators
    - (iv) for members of the school community.

CRISIS INTERVENTIONS

The intensive intervention strategies outlined in this section are intended to bring peaceful resolutions to conflict situations in an expeditious manner. Staff responses to conflicts must be age and circumstance appropriate. By their actions, intervenors can exacerbate or defuse potentially volatile situations. Many school districts and/or communities have crisis response teams in place. The assistance of such teams should be activated when appropriate.

The primary objectives of all interventions should be:
- ensuring the personal safety of all individuals
- initiating appropriate communications
- reducing the level of emotion, anxiety and tension
- enlisting necessary support
- moving the conflict to a peaceful resolution
- ensuring appropriate debriefing and follow-up.

Many elements of a crisis management plan will be used to achieve these objectives depending upon the specific situation.

SPECIFIC CRISIS RESPONSES

Lists of "Do's" and "Don'ts" for use in crisis situations are presented in Appendix 2, pages 132–146. These lists help crisis management teams develop procedures to fit a school's unique circumstances. They are suggestions rather than prescriptions, and reflect current thinking and practice in this area. Adults in positions of responsibility can significantly influence the outcome of potentially violent situations. Through the use of effective communication skills which convey respect and confidence, aggressive and hostile behaviour can often be defused. Active listening skills and assertive communication contribute greatly to the effective resolution of volatile situations.[34] Dealing with a crisis can be broken down into a three-step process.

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[34] From *Preventing violence and enhancing safety in Vancouver schools* (section V, p. 2), by Vancouver School Board, 1995, Vancouver, BC: Vancouver School Board. Reprinted with permission.

Step 1: First, the intervenor must assess the situation. All relevant data must be gathered and processed as quickly as possible. Response plans should be rehearsed and modified accordingly.

Step 2: Step 2 involves the intervenor's responses. Remember, these responses are meant to defuse and bring an end to the crisis not exacerbate it. The "Don'ts" are as important as the "Do's."

Step 3: The follow-up activities make up Step 3 of the process. The incident is reviewed, responses evaluated and plans modified if necessary. It is important to see if the communication process was appropriate and successful. Ongoing support for victims, offenders, intervenors, witnesses and others may be a part of this step when necessary.

School Board and School Disaster Plans

School boards and schools have an obligation to protect and ensure the health and safety of students and staff in the event of emergencies or disaster situations. Disasters are sudden, unexpected events which cause death, injury and/or and property damage. Such incidents involving schools could have grave consequences for students and staff. Experience shows that emergency preparedness is one of the most effective means of mitigating the effects of disasters.

The Disaster Services Branch of Alberta Municipal Affairs, and Alberta Learning recommend that each school board develop a school board disaster plan and each school develop a school disaster plan to ensure emergency preparedness. These plans outline the priorities and responsibilities to support an emergency response beyond normal procedures. Disaster plans need to facilitate the co-ordination of school board and school disaster plans with the relevant municipal emergency plan and the establishment of essential communication links. Each disaster plan is intended to assist school board and school emergency planners in the development, implementation, assessment and revision of their school board disaster plans. Staff of the Disaster Services Branch of Alberta Municipal Affairs are available to help review and evaluate such plans.[35] Contact them at (780) 422–9000.

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[35] From *School board disaster plan* (Foreword, p. 1), by Alberta Transportation and Utilities, Disaster Services Branch, 1997, and *School disaster plan* (p. 1), by Alberta Transportation and Utilities, Disaster Services Branch, 1997, Edmonton, AB: Alberta Transportation and Utilities, Disaster Services Branch. Reproduced with permission.

The decision to activate the school disaster plan is made by the principal or designate when:

- the safety of students and staff is at risk
- directed by the superintendent or designate
- directed by a law enforcement officer
- recommended by the Director of Disaster Services for the local municipality.[36]

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[36] From *School disaster plan* (p. 5), by Alberta Transportation and Utilities, Disaster Services Branch, 1997, Edmonton, AB: Alberta Transportation and Utilities, Disaster Services Branch. Reproduced with permission.

Section V: Communications and Follow-Up Reports

There cannot be a crisis next week . . . My schedule is already full.

Henry Kissinger

Effectively handling the complex communications associated with any crisis requires planning, skill and the use of pre-established channels. This section provides guidance in preparing for and dealing with communications during and following crisis situations.

Webster defines "communicate" as, "to transmit information, thought or feeling so that it is satisfactorily received or understood." In addition, communication is defined as, "a process by which information is exchanged between individuals through a common system of symbols, signs or behaviour." Effective communication processes should transmit messages using common means so that the sender and the receiver have the same understanding of the message. School officials hope that crisis situations will not occur in their schools. School staffs, under the leadership of principals, are well-advised to take the necessary steps to be able to communicate effectively during a crisis.[37]

The safety of the students and staff are a priority. Schools should have an ongoing public relations program that involves regular communication with the community, parents, school board members, central office personnel and the media. Generally, these will be program and activity reports, student progress reports, details of new initiatives, and/or expressions of appreciation. These positive messages and regular contacts foster supportive relationships and respect for the school. The school depends upon these prior activities and the effectiveness of the crisis communication plan to ensure positive communication in the event of a crisis.

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[37] From "What to do before the violence happens: designing the crisis communication plan," by L. Armistead, 1996, *NASSP Bulletin*, 80(579), p. 31. Reprinted with permission. For more information concerning NASSP services and/or programs, call (703) 860-0200.

Crisis Communication Plan

First graders like surprises; your superintendent doesn't.

Bagin, 1995, p. 161.

The crisis communication plan identifies the key audiences with whom the school needs to communicate and the procedures for initiating or handling such communication. These audiences include staff members, students, parents, the district office, emergency services and the media. They may also include school council representatives, the school's business partners, local trustees and other schools in the district. The crisis management team should identify the key audiences to be reached after considering the unique circumstances of their school and community.

INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS

Internal communication under crisis conditions must be quick, clear and pre-planned. Coded messages must be determined in advance, clearly understood, and lead to predictable responses by staff and students. Battery-powered megaphones, two-way radios and/or loud speakers should be available in case the intercom system isn't working. A system of silent (low-key) communications should be in place. Written messages may need to be hand delivered around the school.

It is important for staff members to have an early opportunity to become informed of all aspects of the emergency. They have important roles to play and need accurate information. Call a staff meeting if possible. If not, distribute information as quickly and accurately as possible. Use the intercom, computer messages, e-mail, telephone and/or hand-delivered written messages if necessary.

Staff are responsible for informing students about the nature, seriousness and current state of the crisis. They direct the responses of students based upon this information and the emergency response plans already in place. Students must be assured that their safety is the first priority for those responding to the situation. Students also need to know that their parents are being kept informed about all developments in the crisis, including school and community agency responses.

Effective internal communication procedures produce orderly co-ordinated responses, enhance the safety and security of students and staff, instill confidence and minimize the damage resulting from any crisis. A Crisis Information Summary form is included on page 150.

Quick, concise and accurate communication with appropriate central office personnel is a crucial component of effective internal communication. Senior administrators must be kept informed on an ongoing basis. This news should not come to them first via the media.

EXTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS

Communications with emergency response agencies, such as the police, fire department and/or ambulance services need to be quick, accurate, brief and include sufficient information to initiate the appropriate response. For example, in the event of a disaster, firefighters need to know if dangerous chemicals are involved, if people are trapped, if the school has been evacuated, if there has been an explosion, etc. Such relevant details help them prepare their response and save time in the end. Likewise, police need to know if weapons are involved and if so, what kind of weapons. How many people are involved? Has anyone been injured? Is anyone being held hostage? Is the school under lock-down? Advance communication with these agencies clarifies the "when," "how," "who" and "what" of emergency calls.

In the event of a disaster, the crisis communication plan must be activated and the process monitored throughout the emergency. Consideration needs to be given to how best to communicate with parents. It is normal for parents to panic if they believe the safety of their children is at stake. If possible, provide parents with prompt accurate information in their homes. The media can play a vital role in this process if plans are in place prior to an emergency. If parents do arrive at the school, it may be best to divert them to another area where a school official can meet with them. If deaths and/or serious injuries are involved, provide counselling services and community support for parents, if possible. Crowd control is an important element of a crisis management plan.

DEALING WITH THE MEDIA

An important task during and immediately following a crisis at school is dealing with the media. Emergencies at school often make headline news. To do their jobs, reporters must get the story. If someone at the school doesn't answer their questions, they will find someone who will. The media will cover the crisis with or without your consent or input, so it is important that your crisis communication plan provides for media sessions. One person should be designated as the spokesperson for the school and all communication should be channeled through that person. The spokesperson can and should direct when and where the news briefing will take place. Remember, reporters have deadlines, so unreasonable delays will not be acceptable. It may be that some preliminary information can be provided with a more formal news conference organized later. Invite all local media if possible. Do not say, "no comment," but rather, indicate that at present, details are limited, investigations continue or that it is unwise to speculate at this time.

Provide assurances that everything possible is being done, that the safety and well-being of students are the primary concerns, and that further details will be provided, as soon as possible, at a news conference. At any news conference, formal or informal, be calm, professional, responsive, timely and honest in providing information and answering questions. A post-emergency news conference should be called following any crisis that "made the news" to bring closure to the situation and re-establish trust with the community. At this press conference, all aspects of the incident should be reviewed. This includes revisiting the emergency responses taken by the school and the community to minimize the negative outcomes of the situation. It should be mentioned that the school's crisis response and communication plans will be reviewed and, if necessary, revised to ensure that the school is prepared to effectively handle any future crisis situations.

It helps to get to know representatives of the media when there is no crisis. Invite them to cover positive events at the school and show them that staff members deal effectively with student misbehaviour and other disruptive issues. By acknowledging the impact of societal issues on the school and by identifying the positive initiatives taken by the school to prevent, reduce and/or eliminate these problems, the likelihood that reporters will present balanced reports about your school is greatly increased.[38]

KEY ELEMENTS OF A CRISIS COMMUNICATION PLAN

The plan should:

- be in writing
- be shared with all staff
- allow for meaningful input and be revised as needed
- identify key audiences
- identify the best channels for emergency communication with each audience
- list required emergency equipment, such as flashlights, megaphones, cameras, cell phones, radios, etc. and include a process to ensure the equipment is in working order; e.g., check equipment and change the batteries every time you change the clocks for daylight savings time
- designate a spokesperson and an alternative to handle communication during a crisis
- direct all communication through the designated spokesperson
- provide for quick and complete communication with all staff as soon as possible and as often as necessary
- develop and implement a system of coded messages to transmit specific information and initiate specific responses
- develop phone fan-out plans in advance, using different plans for different purposes
- identify suitable locations for media conferences
- include arrangements for setting up a press conference site as soon as possible (provide refreshments if possible)
- identify suitable locations where anxious parents and others can be sent

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[38] From "Tell teen gangs: school's out," by K. S. Trump, 1993, *The American School Board Journal*, 180(7), p. 41. Reprinted with permission from *The American School Board Journal*, (July 1993). Copyright (1993), National School Boards Association. All rights reserved.

- provide for a post-crisis news conference to bring closure, and restore trust and confidence in the ability of the school to keep students safe and secure
- remind everyone that all communication must have the safety and security of students as the prime objective.

MEETING THE MEDIA DURING A CRISIS

Holding a press conference may be necessary to convey the message that the situation is being dealt with and the immediate concern is the safety and security of all students and staff. The following "do's" and "don'ts" are provided to help make press conferences successful.

MEETING THE MEDIA

DO

✓ Take a private moment to prepare yourself. Plan your final statement in advance. Prepare a written statement for distribution if time allows. Consult with the superintendent if possible.

✓ Present a calm, professional image.

✓ Treat media representatives with respect. They have a job to do and a deadline to meet.

✓ Deliver your message in addition to answering their questions. Your message should include:

- We are dealing with this situation in accordance with a pre-established plan.
- Our immediate concern is the safety and security of our students and staff.
- As professionals, we are concerned about what has happened and we have solicited the assistance of other professionals from emergency service agencies in the community.
- We intend to keep communication lines open.

✓ If, during the conference, there are important new developments, set the time and place for the next press conference and adjourn.

✓ Listen carefully to the questions.

✓ Keep your answers simple and factual.

✓ Be sure of your facts — if you don't know for sure, say so.

✓ Be honest.

✓ Set the time and place for the next press conference and adjourn.

✓ Thank the press for their co-operation.

DON'T

✗ Rush into a press conference until you are ready.

✗ Be confrontational.

✗ Say "no comment" — find another way to say you aren't able to answer that question right now.

✗ Use jargon or over answer a question.

✗ Lay blame or identify a scapegoat.

✗ Give out specifics, such as names of victims, perpetrators, etc. This may not be public information.

✗ Talk "off the record." It seldom is.

✗ Allow the press to wander around the school doing interviews, filming, etc.

✗ Forget to deliver your message.

✗ Hesitate to include someone else (police, fire, emergency services, etc.) if they have information you don't have. However, you must remain in control of the press conference.

✗ Repeat negative questions or misleading words in your response because the comments may be attributed to you. Try to turn negatives into positives.

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FOLLOW-UP

Closure cannot be brought to an emergency situation until appropriate debriefing has occurred and post-incident reports are completed. Based upon information received through debriefings and reports, the crisis management and crisis communication plans should be reviewed and if necessary, revised. It often helps to have objective people, who weren't directly involved in the crisis situation, review these plans as well. They may have valuable observations and perceptions which will improve planning and preparation for another emergency. Sample report forms and debriefing forms may be of assistance. They are provided in Appendix 3, pages 147–153.

DEBRIEFING

Crisis situations can significantly impact children. It may be difficult for them to understand and accept that there are events in their lives that can't be controlled or predicted. It is important that an opportunity is provided for everyone involved to be debriefed as soon as possible.

Debriefing is a formal, structured planned process geared to a group. The focus is to identify and talk about the event, and problems and issues related to the event. An attempt is made to bring closure to the event and understand the whole process from the general event, to specific actions and experiences, to sharing personal experiences.

GROUP DEBRIEFING GUIDELINES

The following are guidelines for planning a meeting to review the handling of an emergency at school. More than one meeting may be needed if different groups are involved.

- Notify all participants in writing, giving date, time, place.
- Meeting location should be comfortable, accessible and not connected to the crisis situation.
- Seat participants facing each other (circle or rectangle) if possible.
- Introduce the crisis management team and review the facts of the situation.
- Have one person designated to take notes during the meeting.
- Welcome questions, comments and concerns, and correct any misinformation.
- Have facial tissues and water available.
- Refreshments and snacks may be provided if appropriate.
- Let people move around if they wish.
- Move the discussions along, covering the following agenda items:
    - welcome and introductions
    - express empathy and understanding
    - review the facts
    - questions, comments, concerns
    - correct misinformation
    - what did we do right?
    - what mistakes did we make?
    - evaluate support services used
    - evaluate the communication processes used
    - summarize
    - distribute post-crisis debriefing forms to be filled out later
    - thank everyone
    - adjourn.
- The meeting should not last more than two hours.

DEFUSING

Defusing is a supportive, personalized, safe, interactive process to help individuals affected by a crisis develop coping skills and heal. Individuals meet in small groups with facilitators who provide an opportunity for participants to talk freely about the event and their experiences. It can be emotional.

Defusing can help staff:
- cope with their own natural feelings of helplessness, fear and anger first — until staff have the opportunity to do this, it is difficult to help students
- put the crisis situation or disaster into context and try to provide a perspective
- communicate in a positive optimistic tone with students, parents and the public
- start the healing process — relieve and soothe students
- identify students who may need the intervention of mental health professionals or others outside the classroom.

CRITICAL INCIDENT STRESS MANAGEMENT

Critical incident stress is caused by any event which overwhelms the capacities of a person to psychologically cope with an incident. The incidents vary from crisis situations to major disasters. The type of event is not as important as the impact that it has on the people affected by it. Responses may include a variety of cognitive, behavioural, physical and/or emotional symptoms. These responses, which can be immediate or delayed, may interfere with the ability to function. When the impact is negative and powerful, a critical incident stress debriefing may be necessary.

For assistance with critical incident stress debriefing, contact the local community mental health unit. All regional health authorities in the province have resource personnel trained in critical incident stress management (CISM). For more information, contact the Alberta Mental Health Board at (780) 427–4449 or toll-free in Alberta by dialling 310–0000.

The importance of effective communication during and following crisis situations can not be over-emphasized. Successful outcomes that minimize the negative effects of these situations often hinge on the communication process used. Advance planning greatly improves the school's chances of handling crises with minimum disruption and negative publicity.

Appropriate follow-up reassures students of their safety in the school and of the genuine concern of staff for their welfare. It also helps re-establish the confidence of parents and the community. Reviewing and revising crisis management and communication plans, based upon reliable feedback, ensures schools are prepared for future emergencies.

With an emphasis on safety and security, schools must effectively manage conflict-based crises, serious accidents and natural disasters. Emergencies present extraordinary and often unpredictable challenges. Advance planning, preparation and practice help school staff meet these challenges with competence and confidence. School staffs are encouraged to develop and implement crisis management plans to support safety and security in their schools.

Section VI: Support Organizations and Agencies

It takes a whole village to raise a child.

African proverb

The African proverb, "It takes a whole village to raise a child," expresses the need for schools to co-ordinate their efforts with parents, and other community support and service agencies. Sometimes, when school officials perceive the surrounding environment poses risks to student safety and school security, they respond in a defensive manner. However, violence prevention and effective crisis response require schools and communities to collaborate. Schools should take a leadership role in involving the community in the education and socialization of its children.[39] Such involvement serves as a deterrent to violence and disruptive behaviour, and facilitates coping with such behaviour should it occur.

The Alberta Children's Initiative

The Alberta Children's Initiative: An Agenda for Joint Action, reflects the government's commitment to strengthening community-based services by encouraging collaborative approaches to planning and delivering services for children and their families. Increased collaboration will help ensure Alberta's children are healthy, well cared for, safe and successful at learning.

The efforts, involvement and commitments of school administrators and community agencies will determine how the educational service component is strengthened by collaboration. By working together with local, regional and provincial partners — Child and Family Services Authorities, Regional Health Authorities, community members and parents — the services will be defined by the unique needs and resources of each school, community and authority.

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[39] From "Violence in schools: how to build a prevention program from the ground up," by D. Walker, 1995, *OSSC Bulletin*, 38(5), p. 45. © Oregon School Study Council, 1995. For information on subscriptions to *OSSC Bulletin*, please contact the Oregon School Study Council, College of Education, 1215 University of Oregon, Eugene, OR, 97403-1215; telephone (541) 346-1397 (US subscriptions $75 [US funds], foreign subscriptions $100 [US funds]).

Community Members

The school should find ways to involve interested individual members of the community in meaningful ways in the school's curricular and/or extra-curricular programs. Parent involvement is vital. Schools that implement successful parent-partnership programs, enjoy high levels of support and approval. This positive attitude on the part of parents carries over to the community in general.

Parents and other community members can get involved with schools in several ways. Since each school has a unique milieu, the school staff and school council should consider which programs might be best suited to their school. Some of these programs are described below.

MENTOR RELATIONSHIPS

To mentor means to guide, coach, tutor or counsel in a trusting relationship. The careful pairing of a student with an approved adult mentor can have beneficial results for both members. Mentors can be recruited from interested parents, supportive services clubs and local business organizations. Students are usually selected by teachers and counsellors, and are paired by personal interests, individual needs and strengths, and/or vocational interests. School personnel need to closely monitor the program to ensure the safety and well-being of students. A training and screening program for mentors is important. Training on volunteer mentorship programs is available from Julia Ellis, Professor, University of Alberta, (780) 492–4273, extension 238.

ADULT VOLUNTEERS

Most schools operate an active adult volunteer program. The assistance of volunteers generally adds considerably to the success of the total school program. It is important that the activities of volunteers in any classroom be under the direction and supervision of the classroom teacher. Schools should develop an orientation program for volunteers that emphasizes confidentiality, the role of non-certificated assistants, communication channels and legal parameters. If volunteers are involved in leadership roles in the school's extra-curricular program, it is important for school officials to ensure that the participation of the volunteer is approved by the school board. This approval ensures that the liability insurance of the board covers the volunteer in case of accident and/or injury.

SENIORS' TUTORING SERVICES

Seniors are a source of experience, diversity, caring and expertise. Many schools have established programs where seniors assist students one-on-one in various subjects. Often, these are read-a-buddy type programs. In some programs, seniors come to the school; in others, students visit seniors. These programs can have many social and educational benefits. The mutual understanding, respect and caring that develop in many of these pairings benefit both parties. Seniors can be important community advocates for schools. They become important role models for students and may be influential allies of the school.

Community Support Groups

SERVICE CLUBS

Many service clubs have strong youth and/or educational support divisions. The resources of these clubs can be accessed by schools to support programs for all students, including at-risk students. Direct contact should be made with these groups.

Members of school staffs might consider joining community-based service clubs. Teachers working on behalf of community projects encourage community groups to provide support to school projects and programs.

The evidence is conclusive that the most effective way to prevent crime is to ensure healthier children, stronger families, better schools and more cohesive communities.

National Crime Prevention Council of Canada, 1996, p. 1.

VOLUNTEER PROGRAMS

Most communities have volunteer programs, such as Block Parent, Neighbourhood Watch, Welcome Wagon, etc. These programs enhance the sense of belonging and feelings of safety in the community. Schools should consider ways of assisting such programs by providing support, facilities for meetings, space for training programs and volunteer support at appropriate times. School-community support should be a reciprocal arrangement. By sharing school facilities, schools can be seen as supporting those appropriate community initiatives that promote the community, its values and public education.

COMMUNITY-BASED AGENCIES

If your community has agencies which provide services and support to new citizens, the homeless, families experiencing poverty, single-parent families and others in need, the school should look for ways to support such programs. The work of the food bank, charity clubs, parenting education groups, new immigrant support groups, Head Start programs and other such agencies helps reduce social problems, reducing and/or alleviating problems the school might face. The school has a role as a significant social institution in addition to its primary role as an educational institution.

One school council in Edmonton has organized a community supported program to assist students and parents. A major component of the program addresses aggressive and antisocial behaviours of students five to 16 years of age. The program works with students, staff and parents. Through the efforts of the school council, this program is supported by the school, school council, Edmonton Police Service, Edmonton Food Bank, Edmonton City Centre Church Corporation, Aboriginal Consulting Services, Maple Leaf Rebekak Lodge, Jewel Rebekak Lodge, Odd Fellows, Public Works and Government Services Canada, Safeway, Sikh Federation of Alberta, Community Schools' Volunteers, Our House, Norwood Legion, YWCA, Yellowhead Youth Centre, State Farm and Eastward Buchanan Church. This example demonstrates the tremendous scope of some of the Safe and Caring Schools initiatives undertaken by schools and their communities.

COMMUNITY CONFERENCING

Community conferencing involves the community of people affected by an offence. It is a way to make offenders accountable to the people they have harmed. The conference provides a forum in which offenders, victims and their supporters can seek ways to repair the damage caused by an incident and minimize further harm. In a physical sense, community conferencing is a gathering of people sitting in a circle. A trained facilitator predetermines the seating arrangement and begins the process with the offender who admits his or her involvement in the incident.

Community conferencing gives offenders an opportunity to understand the consequences of their actions on others, on themselves and on society in general. The conference gives victims the opportunity to explain how they have been affected and contribute to negotiations for reparation. The outcome is a written agreement signed by the victim and offender.

The Community Conferencing Association of Edmonton, a community-based organization, provides information and training. For more information, contact Edmonton Police Services at (780) 944–5265.

Intervention Using Alternative Programs

Section I, page 2, outlines the legal responsibility of school boards to provide an education program to all resident students. Before a student's education program can be terminated by expulsion, school boards must consider alternative educational options for intervention. Many intervention programs have been locally developed by boards for students who are at risk of dropping out of school due to their behaviours and/or for students with severe behavioural disorders.

ALTERNATIVE PROGRAMS FOR STUDENTS WITH SEVERE EMOTIONAL/BEHAVIOURAL DISORDERS

Alternative programs can be modified or new programs created within a school or district to accommodate students identified as having severe emotional/behavioural disorders. Students who display extreme forms of maladaptive behaviours, and require close, constant adult supervision and other intensive support services need a highly structured environment in order to benefit from an educational program. The behaviours typically displayed by students prior to placement in alternative programs have significantly interfered with both the learning and safety of the student and others. Students who are dangerously aggressive, or exhibit compulsive disorders or psychosis benefit from access to appropriate mental health and therapeutic services. Alternative programs help prepare students to return to regular programs, for high school graduation and/or entry into the world of work.

Effective alternative programs include:

- clearly stated vision, goals and objectives
- low ratio of students to staff
- specialized staff training
- individualization of subject matter
- intensive counselling for behaviour, time and anger management
- alternative setting conducive to learning
- linkages with workplaces and community agencies
- parent support and involvement
- collaboration with parents, community agency personnel and other professional staff, including mental health and therapeutic professionals.

Funding for such programs can be provided through pooling funds received from Alberta Learning for students meeting the criteria of severe disabilities. For more information on funding, refer to the *Funding Manual for School Authorities*. This manual, produced by Alberta Learning, School Finance, is available from the Learning Resources Distributing Centre (LRDC) at (780) 427–2767 or toll-free in Alberta by dialling 310–0000, and can be accessed through http://ednet.edc.gov.ab.ca/funding/.

OUT-REACH PROGRAMS

Many school districts have created learning environments separate from the traditional school environment but under the administration of the district. Usually, these programs are intended for students who want to complete a program of basic education but are unable to attend or benefit from regular school programs. These facilities are stand-alone schools, set up so that students work individually, at their own pace, on their own subjects. The courses are usually provided by the Alberta

Distance Learning Centre through the distance education program. Some courses may be developed locally as well. Staff supervise the students, equipment and facility; monitor student progress, and provide guidance and counselling. Attendance is monitored, regular courses are followed and students are expected to behave in a respectful, responsible manner. The goal is to help students complete their basic education programs outside the regular classroom environment. Some students are able to return to regular school programs after attending outreach programs.

Students Connect with the Community

To complete the circle that brings community resources to support and protect students at school, the school should cultivate options for students to extend their learning and service opportunities into the community. Such opportunities contribute to each student's sense of generosity and belonging. The need to belong is one of the greatest driving forces behind human behaviour. Many subjects in junior and senior high school are appropriate for community service components. Community members' attitudes toward young people change when they see students as active, interested community members. As well, students need to experience the sense of satisfaction that comes from helping others.

> *. . . the highest virtue was to be generous and unselfish.*
>
> Brendtro, Brokenleg & Van Bockern, 1990, p. 44.

Some schools operate volunteer programs by posting or announcing service opportunities and students volunteer to provide the required services. Providing necessary services to seniors, people with disabilities, single parents, volunteer groups, parks and recreation groups, arts and cultural groups, and businesses are some areas where volunteer student support has been used. Students at one school presented a cheque to town council representing the number of hours they provided volunteer services that year. The positive publicity was valuable to the school and satisfying to student participants.

Other schools make community service a required part of one or more courses. School officials say that the spirit of service and generosity is crucial to the development of citizenship and have made community service a curricular requirement. These co-operative work/service experience programs can have many beneficial outcomes. Students better understand and respect the broad economic, social and cultural diversity in the community. The amount of structure varies, but generally, students are expected to meet a pre-arranged schedule and put forth their best efforts while demonstrating an appropriate attitude and image. Supervisors are to recognize the contribution made, rate the level of competence and help students improve in any area where growth is needed.

Effective schools develop a, "this is our school" sense of pride and commitment among students and staff. Strong communities develop a, "this is our community" attitude where the many agencies in the community are committed to working collaboratively for the welfare of all citizens. Programs that involve students in the ongoing life of the community can have important benefits for all concerned.

Many community groups and service organizations have specific programs and/or materials of an educational nature available to schools. These groups are ready and willing to assist schools in efforts to develop and maintain a safe, secure and caring learning and teaching environment. School officials are encouraged to make direct contact with these groups and agencies. At the same time, school personnel might determine in what ways the school can actively support the important work of these agencies. Recognizing the reciprocal nature of school-community support is an important part of any safe, secure and caring school initiative.

Section VII: Staff Development and Teaching Resources

Staff Development Resources

The following resources are recommended to support and assist members of the school community in their efforts to promote a safe and caring school community. This listing is not a complete listing of resources, but a listing of those resources recommended by Alberta Learning to support safe and caring schools in Alberta. The responsibility to evaluate these resources prior to selection rests with the user, in accordance with any existing local policy. Resources listed in this section can be ordered directly from the distributors. See pages 118–121 for a list of distributors' addresses.

AUTHORIZED RESOURCES

Book

As Tough as Necessary: Countering Violence, Aggression and Hostility in Our Schools
This book explains how to create safer schools and classrooms. It offers routine practices that help teachers deal with hostility in children of all ages, including: defusing statements to avoid power struggles, a peer mediation process to help students solve their own problems, stress management skills that promote self-control and problem-solving abilities.

This book is available from the Learning Resources Distributing Centre; order number 379364.

Kit

As Tough as Necessary: A Discipline with Dignity Approach to Countering Aggression, Hostility and Violence
This kit extends the original *Discipline with Dignity* program developed by Richard Curwin and Allen Mendler. It focuses on techniques for handling power struggles, student conflicts and difficult groups of students, including gangs. The cornerstone of this program is that all students, no matter how challenging their behaviour, deserve to be treated with respect and dignity, and that all discipline should be designed to teach responsibility rather than just obedience. *As Tough As Necessary* contains four 20-minute videos, filmed in ECS to Grade 12 multicultural settings to provide strategies for prevention, intervention and resolution of difficult discipline situations. Each video includes

interviews, expert analysis and scenarios that depict conflicts arising in and outside of classrooms. The accompanying 70-page training guide outlines different training sessions.

This resource is available from the Learning Resources Distributing Centre; order number 365404.

Book

Building Foundations for Safe and Caring Schools: Research on Disruptive Behaviour and Violence
This publication is a result of the collaborative research conducted by the Faculties of Education at the Universities of Alberta, Calgary and Lethbridge, under the government's Safe and Caring Schools initiative. The result is a collection of readings that not only describe the nature and extent of disruptive behaviour and violence in Alberta schools but also provide insight into the social, psychological and personal dimensions of disruption and violence in school settings. This book provides a foundation for the development of proactive solutions to the problems facing teachers and administrators in schools today. Summaries of individual research projects are also available at [http://www.education.ualberta.ca/educ/research/tri-fac/tri-fac.html].

This book is available from the Learning Resources Distributing Centre; order number 399932.

Book

Discipline with Dignity
This book presents techniques designed to enhance school and classroom discipline practices. The authors offer guidelines to help teachers develop a repertoire of practical consequences to use when students forget or don't know how to perform the behaviours agreed upon in their social contracts. They suggest a range of strategies for creating additional consequences and encourage treating students in fair and individualized ways. The processes and strategies presented are intended to enhance student self-esteem and invest social problem solving and self-regulation as components of curriculum and instruction.

This book is available from Learning Resources Distributing Centre; order number 379372.

Kit

Discipline with Dignity
This staff development kit contains a philosophy and strategies that form the foundation of effective discipline. The cornerstone of this program is that all students, no matter how challenging their behaviour, deserve to be treated with respect and dignity, and that all discipline should be designed to teach responsibility rather than just obedience. The techniques and strategies were developed by Richard Curwin and Allen Mendler and are derived from their book, *Discipline with Dignity*, published by the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development. This training set includes three 20-minute videos and a comprehensive guide to implementing discipline with dignity throughout the school/district setting.

This resource is available from the Learning Resources Distributing Centre; order number 365412.

Book

Reclaiming Youth at Risk: Our Hope for the Future
This book blends theory with practice to "reclaim" environments for youth at risk. The reclaiming environment is one that creates changes that meet the needs of both the young person and society. Part I examines the alienation of children in the often inhospitable environments of modern society. Part II presents a holistic Native American philosophy of child development. Part III highlights principles and strategies for creating reclaiming environments.

This book is available from the Learning Resources Distributing Centre; order number 387078.

Kit

Reclaiming Youth at Risk: Our Hope for the Future
This kit includes three videos with support materials designed to help adults provide a "reclaiming" environment for youth at risk. This environment supports the positive and successful development of all children. The philosophical basis for the program is a synthesis of the wisdom of pioneering specialists in child development and the traditional child-rearing practices of North American Natives. It emphasizes focusing on the strengths of each youth and suggests that human development is based on attempts to meet the four basic needs — belonging, mastery, independence and generosity represented on the Native America Circle of Courage. Program materials are available from the ATA library.

This resource is available from the Learning Resources Distributing Centre; order number 365420.

Book

Skillstreaming the Adolescent: New Strategies and Perspectives for Teaching Prosocial Skills

This book addresses social skill deficiency and its remediation through the prosocial skills training approach called "skillstreaming." The curriculum is divided into six skill groups: beginning social skills, advanced social skills, skills for dealing with feelings, alternatives to aggression, skills for dealing with stress and planning skills. Within each skill group, strategies are provided for teaching adolescents 50 specific prosocial skills; e.g., starting a conversation, apologizing, expressing feelings, standing up for a friend, responding to failure, setting a goal. Other components include a student manual that serves as both a reference and an organizer; and a program forms booklet containing a collection of assessment forms, checklists and student handouts.

This book is available from the Learning Resources Distributing Centre; order number 376617. Also available are the student manual (order number 376500) and the program forms booklet (order number 376576).

Book

Skillstreaming the Elementary School Child: New Strategies and Perspectives for Teaching Prosocial Skills

This book addresses social skill deficiency and its remediation through the prosocial skills training approach called "skillstreaming." The curriculum is divided into five skill groups: classroom survival skills, friendship-making skills, skills for dealing with feelings, alternatives to aggression and skills for dealing with stress. Within each skill group, strategies are provided for teaching elementary school children 60 specific prosocial skills; e.g., asking for help, saying thank you, using self-control, accepting consequences, making a complaint, dealing with group pressure. Other components include a student manual that serves as both a reference and an organizer; and a program forms booklet containing a collection of assessment forms, checklists and student handouts.

This book is available from the Learning Resources Distributing Centre; order number 376584. Also available are the student manual (order number 376592) and the program forms booklet (order number 376609).

Program

Toward a Safe and Caring Curriculum: ATA Resources for Integration
This project is part of the Minister's Safe and Caring Schools initiative. Curriculum support materials, including detailed lesson plans, are prepared by Alberta teachers. They adapt and extend the Lions-Quest materials so they can be incorporated into the Alberta programs of study from ECS to Grade 12. The mission of this project is to encourage school practices which model and reinforce socially responsible and respectful behaviours so that learning and teaching can take place in a safe, secure and caring environment.

These resources are available from the Safe and Caring Schools Project of The Alberta Teachers' Association.

RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

ABUSE PREVENTION SERVICES

Abuse Prevention Services: Canadian Red Cross
The Alberta regions of the Canadian Red Cross deliver two workshops and volunteer training to teach young people and the adults who work with them how to recognize child abuse and family violence. They are:

Program

1. ***Child Abuse Prevention Programs for Adolescents (CAPPA)***
   Substance abuse, teen prostitution, juvenile delinquency, truancy and running away are some of the results of child abuse in society. This program seeks to prevent the onset and worsening of abusive and neglectful situations that victimize adolescents.

Program

2. ***Relationship Violence Prevention Program (RVPP)***
   Considered a primary prevention program addressing family and interpersonal violence issues, *RVPP* builds on the concepts and discussion started in the *Child Abuse Prevention Programs for Adolescents*. *RVPP* also initiates support for individuals who may be at risk of, or who are already involved in, abusive relationships.

Volunteers
Volunteer educators are carefully screened, selected and trained to deliver abuse prevention services. Mandatory training includes classroom lectures, observations of program deliveries and a three-month internship.

Resources and Workshops
What's Love Got to Do With It? (dating violence)
It's Not Your Fault (types of abuse)
Hearing the Hurt . . . Changing the Future (overview of services available)
Overview of Abuse Prevention Services

More information on the above services and programs is available from Abuse Prevention Services, Northern Alberta Region of the Canadian Red Cross.

ADMINISTRATION

The four following books are available from the Alberta Civil Liberties Research Centre.

Book

Freedom of Expression: Hate Literature
Includes an overview and a critique of the law of hate literature as it relates to freedom of expression, and examines case law and decisions. Appropriate for mature students or adults who are able to examine it from a critical thinking perspective.

Book

Review of Individual Rights and Protection Act
Includes information and legal obligations of those working with children and youth as to their rights under the *Act*. The resource includes recommendations from the Alberta Civil Liberties Research Centre that educators need to examine from a critical thinking and teaching perspective.

Book

Rights and Responsibilities in Canada:
Navigating Through Alberta's Schools
Provides an overview of the legal requirements of school administrators in relation to the operation of schools in Alberta. Relevant legal cases are cited particularly as they relate to the rights of students and parents.

Book

Sexual Harassment in School:
Your Rights and Responsibilities
Includes a student manual and teachers' guide. Both provide information on what sexual harassment is and the applicable laws with an emphasis on the school environment.

Book

Violence in Schools: Programs and Policies for Prevention
Provides practical examples of policies and programs used in Canadian schools to reduce violent incidents and improve attitudes. It discusses youth and youth gangs, violence against teachers and students, bullying, sexual harassment and sexual assault. The programs provide educators with advice and direction.

This book is available from the Canadian Education Association.

Book

Working Towards a Safe School: Canadian Administrator's Guide
Designed to support violence-prevention efforts, and help establish and enhance a safe school environment. The guide supports the Lions-Quest violence prevention programs for ECS to Grade 12, including: *Working It Out* (ECS to Grade 6), *Working Towards Peace* (Grades 6–8), *Exploring the Issues: Promoting Peace and Preventing Violence* (Grades 9–12), and the accompanying ECS to Grade 12 comprehensive life skills programs: *Skills for Growing* (ECS to Grade 5), *Skills for Adolescence* (Grades 6–8) and *Skills for Action* (Grades 9–12).

This book is available from Lions Quest Programs and Training Information, Lions-Quest Canada.

BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT

Book

Classroom Management: A Thinking and Caring Approach
This book was written to extend the classroom management skills of classroom teachers and educators in staff development. It is useful for teachers in mentoring roles or those in a position to help teachers with classroom management. It focuses on how effective teachers prevent and respond to misbehaviours to create a better learning environment.

This book is available from The Teachers' Book Depository.

Book

A Collaborative Approach to Social Skills Instruction
This book provides educators working together as co-teachers or team teachers with a practical way to teach social skills. It focuses on teaching social skills by combining an instructional framework with a collaborative model. It provides teachers with effective ways to infuse social skills into classroom lessons and the school day.

This book is available from Exceptional Innovations, Inc.

Kit

Interventions: Collaborative Planning for Students at Risk
This comprehensive resource consists of two components to help educators plan and implement strategies for at-risk students. The procedural manual provides information on how to design and implement high-quality intervention plans. The 16 self-contained booklets offer proven intervention plans with step-by-step instructions for implementing, monitoring and fading a specific intervention. The booklets include topics on self-control, training, restructuring, self-talk, academic assistance, managing physically dangerous behaviour, managing severely disruptive behaviour, self-monitoring and managing stress. Twenty optional cassettes are also available.

This resource is available from The Teachers' Book Depository.

Book

Life Space Intervention:
Talking with Children and Youth in Crisis
Offers a significant breakthrough in teaching professionals the unique skill of interviewing children and youth during interpersonal crises. This book prepares adults to deal with all aspects of student stress, teaches the steps involved in carrying out successful life-space interventions and describes five therapeutic life-space interventions that are typical and beneficial to students in conflict. It deals with using life-space interventions with young children and those with developmental disabilities. This book is geared to special educators, counsellors, child care workers, social workers and probation officers who work with children in crisis situations.

This book is available from Mind Resources Inc.

Book

The Teachers' Encyclopedia of Behavior Management:
100 Problems/500 Plans
This reference book contains approximately 100 common classroom problems arranged alphabetically. Each problem includes general considerations, model plans and suggested steps for developing and implementing a plan. The appendices deal with three topics: reinforcing appropriate behaviour, assigning responsibilities or jobs and responding to inappropriate behaviour. An index includes multiple descriptive titles for each problem.

This book is available from The Teachers' Book Depository.

Book

The Tough Kid Book: Practical Classroom Management Strategies

Gives teachers practical techniques to use with students who have behavioural difficulties. The techniques can be implemented inexpensively and quickly. The book is divided into four chapters: what tough kids look like, interventions to reward students who perform academically and socially, realistic techniques to help teachers stop behaviours, and advanced techniques, including social skills training, instructional techniques and parent training information.

This book is available from The Teachers' Book Depository.

Book

The Tough Kid Toolbox

Complements and supplements the *Tough Kid Book* by providing in-depth explanations and techniques that teachers can use in everyday situations. The sections include: mystery motivators, home-note program, self-monitoring program, behaviour contracting, tracking procedures, unique reinforcers and general interventions. Each section includes a definition of the intervention, a specific description of the intervention and complete steps for implementation. Trouble-shooting suggestions and "making it even better" suggestions are offered as well.

This book is available from The Teachers' Book Depository.

Video

Understanding and Managing the Behavior of Young Children

Most young children occasionally present behaviour problems, however some children exhibit severe behaviour difficulties that interfere with learning and building positive interpersonal relationships. This video explores the causes of challenging behaviours in young children, and helps teachers and other care-givers intervene effectively. It emphasizes observation as a technique for understanding behaviour and demonstrates positive ways to provide structure and minimize the effect of upsetting situations.

This video is available from Magic Lantern Communications Ltd.

Video

Working with Hostile and Resistant Teens
This video series consists of role plays with at-risk teens who are, in most cases, acting out their own personal histories. Steven Campbell, a therapist working with hostile teens, has developed an effective anger-management strategy. Campbell plays the lead role in the video and then provides an analysis of each scenario showing viewers how to work effectively with such teens. This series is appropriate for counsellors, therapists, administrators, teachers, special education teachers and parents of angry teenagers.

This video is available from Jeflyn Media Consultants.

CONFLICT RESOLUTION

Program

Centre for Conflict Resolution and Training
This centre provides internet-based dispute resolution training through open registration courses both on campus and via satellite locations. Coursework can lead toward a certificate in conflict resolution. A special program is also available to First Nations' groups.

More information on this program is available from the Justice Institute of British Columbia.

Program

***Crisis Prevention Institute Inc.* (CPI)**
This institute offers a variety of resources and services to meet the training needs of teachers, including nonviolent crisis intervention training.

More information on this program is available from Crisis Prevention Institute.

Video

Listen Up!: Kids Talking about Good Teaching
In this 24-minute video, junior high students share their reflections on their elementary school experiences. They offer advice to teachers and student teachers about what is helpful and important to students in making the classroom a supportive place. *Listen Up!* is intended for use by teachers and teacher education programs. The video is designed by Alberta researchers to be an effective discussion starter rather than a how-to training video. It includes student ideas, useful strategies and advice on how to win over students.

This video is available from Mighty Motion Pictures.

ANGER MANAGEMENT

Book

Dealing with Anger
A practical, user-friendly book on the emotion most often denied and/or feared. Everyone gets angry at one time or another. How people deal with and express their anger has an important impact on personal and work relationships as well as physical health.

This book is available from SL Discovery Consulting Services Inc.

BULLYING

Book

Bully Proofing Your School:
A Comprehensive Approach for Elementary Schools
To tackle the growing problem of bullying, a team of professional educators, psychologists and social workers in the Cherry Creek School Division in Colorado developed this handbook. It provides the basis for a comprehensive program to make the school environment safe for children both physically and psychologically. The program presents a process and all the handouts needed to develop a school-wide program.

This book is available from The Teachers' Book Depository.

Book

The Bullying Prevention Handbook:
A Guide for Principals, Teachers, and Counselors
This handbook was developed primarily for administrators, teachers and school counsellors of students in Grades 5–9. It provides research to support a comprehensive approach that promotes prevention through education. Tools for intervention, and solution-based techniques for building empathy and compassion in preadolescent and adolescent children are also provided.

This book is available from National Educational Service.

Book

Focus on Bullying:
A Prevention Program for Elementary School Communities

This resource is primarily addressed to educators who want to help students learn to respect and support one another. It provides information about the nature of bullying, and common myths and stereotypes associated with it. It urges parents, teachers and students to work together to develop a blueprint for school communities where students learn and teachers teach.

This book is available from Office Products Centre.

Kit

No More Bullying! Strategies for Prevention

Addresses the serious but often overlooked problem of bullying in elementary schools. This kit helps students explore and understand the dynamics of victimization, including the roles of bully, victim and onlookers. It provides strategies students can use to deal with bullying and harassment, and emphasizes positive social skills and self-esteem. A staff development program helps staff focus on the problem and develop ways to counter bullying in the school setting. Student videos include: *How I Learned Not to be Bullied; No More Teasing: Respect Yourself and Others.* The staff development video is entitled *Bullying at School: Strategies for Prevention.*

This resource is available from Sunburst Communications, Inc.

Kit

Take Action Against Bullying

This kit was developed to educate, mobilize and directly influence school communities to take action to reduce bullying in schools. The activities are geared to elementary and middle schools and can be adapted as needed to take action against bullying wherever it occurs. The kit includes a facilitator's guide, video and posters.

This resource is available from Bully B'ware Productions.

Video

Teasing and Bullying: Unacceptable Behavior

This video and resource guide provide a school/classroom-based education program to help elementary students take responsible action against bullying. The video is narrated by children and shows vignettes of a child who stutters and a child who is overweight as victims of teasing and bullying. The children provide solutions and become active in the process of dealing with teasing, and supporting the victims, bully and peers.

This video is available from the Institute for Stuttering Treatment and Research at the University of Alberta.

Character Education

Book

Developing Character in Students:
A Primer for Teachers, Parents and Communities

This has become the handbook for character education in schools across the country. It is a call to educators and parents to refocus school programs on the development of good character in students. The author argues that effective character education should proceed from the philosophical traditions of Plato and Aristotle, with an emphasis on the growth of intellectual skills and the acquisition of good habits. Universally valued, the traits of respect, responsibility and caring are the essentials of good character.

This book is available from Irwin Publishing.

Video

Eleven Principles of Effective Character Education

This video presents a comprehensive guide to the development and assessment of character education programs in schools. T. Lickona and C. Lewis provide a review of the 11 principles essential to any effective program. This video includes visits to schools with unique character education programs.

This video is available from National Professional Resources Inc.

Book

Teaching Self-Control:
A Curriculum for Responsible Behavior

This proactive, comprehensive curriculum allows teachers to focus on teaching instead of on classroom disruptions by teaching students how to control and take responsibility for their own behaviour. The ready-to-use lesson plans demonstrate how to integrate these skill builders into existing content areas from ECS to Grade 8. It can be used in self-contained or inclusive classrooms to actively involve students in learning 20 basic self-control techniques.

This book is available from National Educational Service.

Conflict Resolution

Kit

Creating the Peaceable School:
A Comprehensive Program for Teaching Conflict Resolution

This conflict-resolution program helps educators create an environment where students can learn and accept their power to create peace within themselves. The program guide, video and student manual provide a comprehensive program for teaching conflict resolution at the elementary and middle school levels.

This resource is available from Colwell Systems Ltd.

Book

Helping Kids Deal with Conflict
This resource for teachers and parents helps explore the roots and expression of conflict, and examines obstacles to resolution, such as self-esteem, peer pressure, bullies, putdowns and teasing. It offers practical techniques for addressing these obstacles. Throughout, the author advocates creating environments where students can learn and practise peaceful conflict resolution.

This book is available from Peguis Publishers Ltd.

Book

Helping Kids Help Themselves
Learn how to help children and young people move toward responsibility and independence by applying the ideas in this book. An expert on control theory and reality therapy, Perry Good explains how teachers, counsellors and parents can help children develop effective successful behaviours.

This book is available from Irwin Publishing.

Lions-Quest Programs

More information on all the following Lions-Quest programs is available from Lions-Quest Canada.

Program

- ***Skills for Growing (ECS to Grade 5)***
  This social and personal skills development program serves as a principal resource for the health curriculum. It also contributes to selected social studies topics and the seven thematic units can be utilized in language arts. The program helps students develop positive behaviours, such as self-discipline, good judgment and taking responsibility. Healthy lifestyle and commitment to family and community is promoted. Teachers receive two days of intensive training prior to implementing the program.

Program

- ***Skills for Adolescence (Grades 6 to 8)***
  A resource for the health curriculum, this program uses co-operative groupwork strategies to help students build self-confidence and communication skills, manage emotions in positive ways, improve peer relationships, strengthen family relationships and set goals for healthy living. A community service component fosters a wide range of reciprocal relationships with the community. Teachers attend a two-day introductory inservice workshop prior to implementing the program.

Program

- ***Skills for Action (Grades 9 to 12)***
  Created to help young people become responsible citizens, this program uses a service-learning approach. Students identify issues of community concern, then plan and carry out service projects or placements. Through these activities, they build a personal profile of their skills, talents, abilities and interests. The material can be used as a major component of the career and life management course or the service-learning component can be used in any subject with an out-of-school component. An intensive two-day workshop prepares participants to implement the program.

Program

- ***Working Toward Peace (Grades 6 to 8)***
  This program focuses on specific strategies for managing anger and conflicts. It provides exercises that help students discover positive role models and develop critical thinking regarding stereotyping. The lessons are designed for easy integration into most subject areas. Students use what they have learned to carry out a service-learning project. An optional one-day workshop is available.

Program

- ***Promoting Peace and Preventing Violence (Grades 8 to 12)***
  These 19 thematic units help students understand the attitudes and behaviours that can lead them from conflict to anger to violence. Students spend time researching and discussing issues, such as intimidation, sexual harassment and protecting themselves. Topics can be selected independently and used to enhance an existing curriculum. An optional one-day workshop is available.

Program

- ***Teens — Alcohol and Other Drugs (Grades 8 to 12)***
  The emphasis is less on specific drug facts and more on examining how drug use can affect a teenager's life, both now and in the future. Students look at community resources, laws and advertising, and talk about how to deal with drug-use pressures and influences. Students also work on a service-learning project to teach others about the important issues concerning drug use. Available with optional training, the program includes material useful in a variety of classrooms.

Program

- ***The Skills Bank (Grades 8 to 12)***
  Consists of 26 skills with optional activities to teach, reinforce and enrich each skill. The skills are classified under the following topics: cultural awareness, interpersonal communication, personal management and responsibility, study and writing skills. Blackline masters are included.

Book

Reducing School Violence Through Conflict Resolution
David and Roger Johnson offer an approach that involves interrelated programs for preventing violence and helping students learn to resolve conflicts constructively. The authors discuss how schools can create a co-operative learning environment where students learn how to negotiate and mediate peer conflicts, and teachers use academic controversies to enhance learning.

This book is available from the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD).

Discipline

Book

Cooperative Discipline Series: Elementary and Secondary Versions
Solutions to classroom disruption and school violence can begin with this resource. *Cooperative Discipline* is a timely, realistic approach to discipline and classroom management. It is a system that not only affirms students, but insists they share responsibility for their behaviour, helping them develop a sense of self-worth that leads to achievement.

This book is available from the American Guidance Service.

Video

Discipline Strategies
Manage the challenging behaviours encountered in today's classroom with *Discipline Strategies* — six inservice videos that provide practical, down-to-earth methods that work. Perfect for new teachers or as a refresher for veteran teachers, each video demonstrates the application of successful strategies for managing a co-operative classroom.

This video is available from Kineticvideo.com.

Book

Disruptive Behavior in Today's Classroom: Strategies for Success
This report addresses effective programs and measures for students who display disruptive or inappropriate behaviours. It focuses primarily on students in regular classrooms and those receiving additional support services. The purpose is to provide the reader with an overview of popular research, describe what works for some educators and guide teachers to further reading on the topic.

This book is available from the Canadian Education Association.

Book

Effective Discipline

This revised edition provides principals, counsellors and teachers with information about research-based techniques that reduce or eliminate school behaviour problems. Prevention is presented as the foundation upon which effective discipline interventions are based. School-wide intervention tactics that involve faculty and parents in a total discipline program are presented. The text discusses preventing discipline problems, identifying specific behaviours that disrupt the environment and matching interventions with infractions.

This book is available from Mind Resources Inc.

Video

Learning Disabilities and Discipline: When the Chips are Down

In this informative video, Richard Lavoie, an expert on learning disabilities, offers practical advice on dealing with behavioural problems quickly and effectively. He explains how to anticipate problems before they begin, and how teachers and parents can create a stable, predictable environment in which students with learning disabilities can flourish.

This video is available from the Visual Education Centre.

Book

Positive Choices: Practical Discipline Techniques for Educators

This booklet addresses effective sensible behavioural principles to encourage and reinforce responsible student behaviour, and develop and promote self-discipline, while treating students with dignity. It provides information on developing rules and consequences, discipline plans, behaviour improvement plans and communicating with parents and other professionals. A variety of suggestions and techniques are provided to effectively deal with student behaviours.

This book is available from Positive Choices.

Book

Reconnecting Youth:
A Peer Group Approach to Building Life Skills
This book outlines a comprehensive program for helping high-risk youth develop skills in the areas of self-esteem, decision making, personal control and interpersonal communication. Parent resources, information on risk factors for identified students, and strategies for involving school and community members are included. Each unit is self-contained with detailed lesson plans and handouts. Evaluation tools are included to make this resource practical and complete.

This book is available from National Educational Service.

Book

Restitution: Restructuring School Discipline
This book is about "making it right." It is an approach to discipline that recognizes young children make mistakes and that these situations provide opportunities for students to take responsibility, choose effective behaviours and create positive solutions. The facilitator's guide provides suggestions for designing and conducting a staff development program. It helps educators set the stage for less coercive management by self-evaluating their current management styles and learning new management skills. The guide includes materials to teach educators how to help students plan and carry out restitution and learn self-discipline.

This book is available from Irwin Publishing.

Drug Abuse

Program

D.A.R.E. — Drug Abuse Resistance Education
D.A.R.E. is a comprehensive prevention program designed to equip elementary school children with skills to recognize and resist social pressures to experiment with tobacco, alcohol and other drugs. This unique program uses uniformed law enforcement officers to teach a formal curriculum to students in a classroom setting. The program gives special attention to fifth and sixth grade students to prepare them for entry into middle/junior high and high school, where they are most likely to encounter pressure to use drugs.

More information on this program is available from the I/C Drug Control Section of the Edmonton Police Service.

Gangs

Video

Gangs and Violence: School Wide Strategies for Prevention and Intervention
These videos provide strategies for creating and maintaining a positive, safe, respectful and caring learning and working environment for all members of the school community through prevention, intervention, encouragement and consequences. Three staff videos and three student videos present information on violence prevention and personal power in maintaining one's own safety.

This video is available from Psycan.

Book

Gangs: Straight Talk, Straight Up: A Practical Guide for Teachers, Parents and the Community
This resource tackles the controversial topic of youth gangs head-on. It is written by Mary Jenson, a professor of special education and Phillip Yerington, an Iowa Police Department specialist on youth gangs. The emphasis is on prevention and eliminating interest in gangs at the "wannabe" stage, when children are still receptive to positive adult influence. It emphasizes comprehensive strategies for establishing a community-wide/school-wide policy for gang behaviours and includes steps that teachers from ECS to Grade 12 can take to educate gang-involved youth and manage their aggressive behaviours.

This book is available from The Teachers' Book Depository.

Peer Mediation

Kit

Peer Mediation: Conflict Resolution in Schools
This resource discusses how to design, implement and operate a successful peer mediation program in junior and senior high schools, placing particular emphasis on social and cultural diversity. The program contains 30 training activities, a student manual and a video to accompany the facilitator's guide.

This resource is available from Colwell Systems Ltd.

Safe Communities

Kit

Communities that Care (CTC)
This community mobilization program empowers individuals and community organizations concerned about the healthy development of young people to work together to prevent adolescent health and behaviour problems. The program addresses risk factors that increase young people's chances of developing problems in the areas of substance abuse, teen pregnancy, crime, school dropout and violence. CTC helps communities reduce risk factors by enhancing protective factors in four important areas — community, home, school and as individuals. CTC provides a way to involve a full range of organizations and groups in the local community in joining forces toward the shared vision of a safe nurturing environment for all children.

This resource is available from Developmental Research and Programs Inc.

Kit

Never be a Victim:
Teaching Life Skills for a Safer Community
This core curriculum resource kit is designed to provide an ongoing teaching and reference program dedicated to student personal safety and crime prevention education. This resource empowers school and parent partnerships and is supported by police, business, the media and community groups, such as Block Parents and Neighbourhood Watch.

This resource is available from ITP Nelson.

Violence Prevention

Program

AVEPY — Alternatives to Violence Educational Program for Youth
This workshop consists of three consecutive, six-hour days of training for youth. The AVEPY instructor and the classroom teacher provide direct skill instruction, skill practice, discussion, role-play experience and lively games to small groups of students. The skills of effective communication, problem solving and conflict resolution are introduced and reinforced daily. This program is designed to be a proactive approach in dealing with the problem of youth violence.

More information on this program is available from AVEPY.

Book

PATHS: Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies

This resource for educators is designed to facilitate the development of self-control, self-esteem, emotional awareness and interpersonal problem-solving skills. The curriculum consists of 199 lessons and was developed for use with elementary-aged students, including students with special needs. The purpose of *PATHS* is to enhance social and emotional competence and understanding in children, and develop a caring prosocial context that facilitates educational processes in the classroom.

This book is available from Developmental Research and Programs.

Book

Violence Prevention: A Group Discussion Approach

This easy-to-use approach facilitates discussion about violence. Adaptable for students from ECS to Grade 12, it enables students to talk about their own experiences with anger, violence and threat, loss of control and the effects of witnessing violence. The session plans are broken down into three areas: primary, junior/intermediate and secondary, and are grouped into themes. Each session takes about 40 minutes to complete.

This book is available from the Guidance Centre at the University of Toronto.

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Appendix 1 — Safe and Caring School Scan

Safe and Caring School Scan

This scan[42] will assist staffs in their efforts to determine the current situation in their schools. Nine components of the school environment are examined. The analysis of each factor will help school staffs review their efforts to provide a safe, secure and caring school environment.

Answer the following questions "Yes" or "No" with reference to your own school. Check the "Don't Know" column if appropriate.

		Yes	No	Don't Know
1.	Is there an effective student code of conduct in place?			
2.	Is teaching excellence given a high focus throughout the year?			
3.	Are teachers generally consistent with each other in handling student misbehaviour?			
4.	Do parents and students regard the school as a caring and inviting place?			
5.	Are support staff members provided with opportunities to update their skills and qualifications?			
6.	Does the school have a good relationship with such community agencies as social services and the police?			
7.	Are all students treated with respect and dignity, regardless of religious, ethnic or racial background?			
8.	Do those students who need it receive specific training in how to behave (social skills training, anger management)?			
9.	Are adequate arrangements in place to supervise students who have to be temporarily removed from the classroom?			
10.	Does your school have an active public relations program?			
11.	Do staff members model appropriate attitudes and behaviours for students?			
12.	Is an effort made to develop and implement mentorship programs for students?			

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		Yes	No	Don't Know
13.	Are regular opportunities provided for students with special needs, including students who are gifted and talented, to receive individual attention?			
14.	Does your school provide any social skills development programs to students, such as incorporating the ATA Safe and Caring Schools materials into the curriculum?			
15.	Is there a concerted effort to identify students with emotional, social and/or behavioural problems early and to ensure these problems are addressed?			
16.	Do staff members care about students and celebrate their successes?			
17.	Do students generally treat each other with respect?			
18.	Are student records and files secure against unauthorized access?			
19.	Have members of the community, other than parents, been involved in reviewing school discipline policies and procedures?			
20.	Are girls and boys expected to adhere to the same standard of conduct and subject to the same range of consequences for misbehaviours?			
21.	Is time spent in assemblies and/or classrooms making sure that all aspects of the school's code of conduct are carefully explained?			
22.	Does the staff make a concerted effort to identify and deal appropriately with all incidents of bullying and harassment?			
23.	Does the administration assume a positive leadership role in dealing with serious behavioural and/or academic concerns?			
24.	Do teachers set high expectations for student learning?			
25.	Are arrangements in place to adequately supervise the school building and grounds?			
26.	Does the school conduct fire and other emergency drills which involve the assistance of the municipality?			
27.	Does the school district provide professional development opportunities for teachers?			
28.	Are students from other cultures given particular help when it comes to understanding the school norms?			
29.	Can all students accused of misbehaviour expect a fair hearing before a consequence is given?			

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		Yes	No	Don't Know
30.	Is there a reasonable range of consequences available to teachers when students create difficulties?			
31.	Are extra efforts made to make the school a clean, well-maintained, welcoming place?			
32.	Are religious, ethnic or racial leaders in the community consulted in regard to student conduct (expectations, mentorship)?			
33.	Do members of the school staff consider themselves to be important members of the larger school community?			
34.	Does your school involve health care workers, social workers and/or psychologists in planning programs for students with special needs?			
35.	Do you have special days or activities set aside to build student and staff cohesion and team spirit?			
36.	Is a regular safety audit completed of the school facilities and grounds?			
37.	Would you describe most of the classrooms in your school as dynamic centres of learning?			
38.	Do you have clear and effective avenues of referral for problematic students?			
39.	Would staff members generally respond negatively to jokes in the staff room that are derogatory toward other individuals or groups?			
40.	Do various members of the staff value the contributions of other staff regardless of their designation or assignment?			
41.	Does the school promote and support ongoing community involvement?			
42.	Are thefts and/or acts of vandalism kept to a minimum by effective prevention and intervention actions?			
43.	Is "emergency" support readily available if staff call the office?			
44.	Does your school work directly with parents of students with problems to help them modify their children's behaviour?			
45.	Are any forms of counselling offered to students?			
46.	Are parents involved in reviewing the school's code of conduct?			
47.	Is information about potentially violent students distributed to staff on a need-to-know basis?			
48.	Does the development of student competence in reading get widespread attention and support?			

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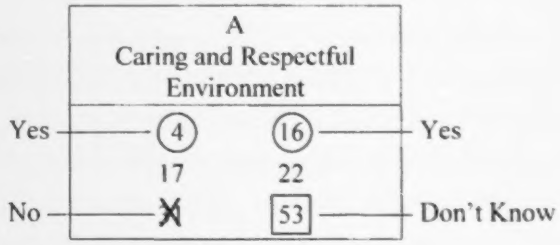
		Yes	No	Don't Know
49.	Do teachers understand and respond to different student learning styles and expressions of intelligence?			
50.	Is respect for various cultures in the community visible in the school (pictures, artifacts, assemblies, etc.)?			
51.	Would you say that a problem-solving (what could you do better next time) attitude is generally taken when students misbehave?			
52.	Do you involve members of the community to help with students who are having problems (work programs, police, support groups)?			
53.	Are all students given the opportunity and encouraged to take leadership roles around the school on a regular basis?			
54.	Do staff members care about each other and work together as members of a team?			
	TOTAL			

DON'T KNOW RESPONSES

An analysis of the "Don't Know" response provides school staff with information on the effectiveness of the school's internal and external communication programs. For some respondents, "Don't Know" should be accepted as an appropriate response.

For a further analysis, see the following page. To determine areas of strengths and weaknesses, circle the "Yes" answers and cross out the 'No" answers on the charts. For "Don't Know" use a square or question mark over the corresponding number.

For example,



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SAFE AND CARING SCHOOL SCAN: ANALYSIS

Nine essential components of the school environment are identified below. These help to identify the specific factors which contribute significantly to a safe, secure and caring school environment.

A Caring and Respectful Environment	
4	16
17	22
31	53

B Safe and Secure Environment	
18	25
36	42
43	47

C Effective Discipline Procedures	
1	3
9	29
30	46

D Focus on Teaching and Learning	
2	13
24	37
48	49

E Equity, Fairness and Tolerance	
7	20
28	32
39	50

F Supportive Strategies	
12	21
34	35
45	52

G Behaviour Management & Skills Development	
8	14
15	38
44	51

H Staff Development, Roles and Relationships	
5	11
23	27
40	54

I Positive School-Community Relationships	
6	10
19	26
33	41

The following pages identify the questions related to each component and elaborate on the significance of each.

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SAFE AND CARING SCHOOL SCAN: COMPONENTS

A **Caring and Respectful Environment**	
4.	Do parents and students regard the school as a caring and inviting place?
16.	Do staff members care about students and celebrate their successes?
17.	Do students generally treat each other with respect?
22.	Does the staff make a concerted effort to identify and deal appropriately with all incidents of bullying and harassment?
31.	Are extra efforts made to make the school a clean, well-maintained, welcoming place?
53.	Are all students given the opportunity and encouraged to take leadership roles around the school on a regular basis?
A caring school, and classrooms that reflect respect and genuine concern for all students are the first and most critical components of a positive school environment. Students, particularly those from troubled and/or dysfunctional environments, must have a sense of belonging in the school if teachers are going to be able to influence students' behaviour and/or their views of themselves and others. A caring respectful environment is free from the risk of direct and indirect violence. A climate of genuine interest in the well-being of all students and staff promotes socially respectful and responsible behaviours. Violent incidents are rare in such a positive environment.	

B **Safe and Secure Environment**	
18.	Are student records and files secure against unauthorized access?
25.	Are arrangements in place to adequately supervise the school building and grounds?
36.	Is a regular safety audit completed of the school facilities and grounds?
42.	Are thefts and/or acts of vandalism kept to a minimum by effective prevention and intervention actions?
43.	Is "emergency" support readily available if staff call the office?
47.	Is information about potentially violent students distributed to staff on a need-to-know basis?
School boards are required to provide a safe environment for students and staff. The security of records and confidential information must also be assured. Damage to public and personal property must be prevented and when it occurs, vandalism and/or theft must be appropriately dealt with. If staff and students are provided with a clean, safe and secure school facility, they will take pride in maintaining it.	

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	C **Effective Discipline Procedures**
1.	Is there an effective student code of conduct in place?
3.	Are teachers generally consistent with each other in handling student misbehaviour?
9.	Are adequate arrangements in place to supervise students who have been temporarily removed from the classroom?
29.	Can all students accused of misbehaviour expect a fair hearing before a consequence is given?
30.	Is there a reasonable range of consequences available to teachers when students create difficulties?
46.	Are parents involved in reviewing the school's code of conduct?

Ambivalence and inconsistency undermine effective school discipline. The code of conduct can serve as a tangible expression of what the expectations, parameters and consequences are for those who work together in a school. The discipline process must be a model of fairness, and consequences for misbehaviour must be seen as reasonable and appropriate. Early detection, combined with serious efforts to teach appropriate, responsible and respectful behaviours, can prevent serious problems.

	D **Focus on Teaching and Learning**
2.	Is teaching excellence given a high focus throughout the year?
13.	Are regular opportunities provided for students with special needs, including students who are gifted and talented, to receive individual attention?
24.	Do teachers set high expectations for student learning?
37.	Would you describe most of the classrooms in your school as dynamic centres of learning?
48.	Does the development of student competence in reading get widespread attention and support?
49.	Do teachers understand and respond to different student learning styles and expressions of intelligence?

Sometimes, the learning opportunities for young people are seen as part of a distinct and separate agenda from the management of student conduct. In fact, these two are closely linked. Students who experience academic failure, are frustrated or bored may become problem members of the school community. Good teaching and high expectations of student learning are significant contributors to the development of responsible and respectful behaviours in students.

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E
Equity, Fairness and Tolerance

7.	Are all students treated with respect and dignity, regardless of religious, ethnic or racial background?
20.	Are girls and boys expected to adhere to the same standard of conduct and subject to the same range of consequences for misbehaviours?
28.	Are students from other cultures given particular help when it comes to understanding the school norms?
32.	Are religious, ethnic or racial leaders in the community consulted in regard to student conduct (expectations, mentorship)?
39.	Would staff members generally respond negatively to jokes in the staff room that are derogatory toward other individuals or groups?
50.	Is respect for various cultures in the community visible in the school (pictures, artifacts, assemblies, etc.)?

Racism, sexism and general intolerance toward others are grist for the mill of antisocial and aggressive behaviour. Teachers must model fairness, tolerance and respect for individual differences and insist on appropriate conduct by students. Schools should overtly celebrate the cultural and human diversity in the community to model acceptance and promote belonging.

F
Supportive Strategies

12.	Is an effort made to develop and implement mentorship programs for students?
21.	Is time spent in assemblies and/or classrooms making sure that all aspects of the school's code of conduct are carefully explained?
34.	Does your school involve health care workers, social workers and/or psychologists in planning programs for students with special needs?
35.	Do you have special days or activities set aside to build student and staff cohesion and team spirit?
45.	Are any forms of counselling offered to students?
52.	Do you involve members of the community to help with students who are having problems (work programs, police, support groups)?

Effective discipline and violence-prevention strategies must be creatively determined by school staff. It is important that a variety of strategies be utilized since different strategies are effective with different students. Communication of expectations is an important component. The goal of the process must be to bring about and/or support prosocial, responsible and respectful behaviour in students.

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G

Behaviour Management and Skills Development

8. Do those students who need it receive specific training in how to behave (social skills training, anger management)?

14. Does your school provide any social skills development programs to students, such as incorporating the ATA Safe and Caring Schools materials into the curriculum?

15. Is there a concerted effort to identify students with emotional, social and/or behavioural problems early and to ensure these problems are addressed?

38. Do you have clear and effective avenues of referral for problematic students?

44. Does your school work directly with parents of students with problems to help them modify their children's behaviour?

51. Would you say that a problem-solving (what could you do better next time) attitude is generally taken when students misbehave?

Often, today's schools must work as much with social and emotional development as with academic development. Opportunities must be provided in the regular curriculum for learning about violence prevention, conflict resolution, interpersonal relationships and social values. These opportunities are best provided in all subject areas when supported by specific learning resources, such as the ATA Safe and Caring School materials. Whether dealing with learning mathematics or anger management, the teacher must see the student as having the potential to do better. Teachers need to work together with parents to modify the unacceptable behaviour of students.

H

Staff Development, Roles and Relationships

5. Are support staff members provided with opportunities to update their skills and qualifications?

11. Do staff members model appropriate attitudes and behaviours for students?

23. Does the administration assume a leadership role in dealing with serious behavioural and/or academic concerns?

27. Does the school district provide professional development opportunities for teachers?

40. Do various members of the staff value the contributions of other staff regardless of their designation or assignment?

54. Do staff members care about each other and work together as members of a team?

Schools where the adults work together as a team toward the achievement of commonly held goals are characterized as less stressful and more satisfying places to work. Students learn better and behave more appropriately in this environment. If the employer recognizes and responds to the professional development needs of staff members, they will be able to keep abreast of current issues in education, such as violence in schools. They will feel more confident in addressing these issues in their schools. The relationships among staff members, and between staff and students must be characterized by mutual respect, trust and harmony.

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I **Positive School-Community Relationships**	
6.	Does the school have a good relationship with such community agencies as social services and the police?
10.	Does your school have an active public relations program?
19.	Have members of the community, other than parents, been involved in reviewing school discipline policies and procedures?
26.	Does the school conduct fire and other emergency drills which involve the assistance of the municipality?
33.	Do members of the school staff consider themselves to be important members of the larger school community?
41.	Does the school promote and support ongoing community involvement?
Schools are not able to operate effectively in isolation from the community. To cope with current social, political and economic pressures, schools must rely upon extensive and continuing support from community members and agencies. If positive, reciprocal relationships are established over time, the school will receive strong support and approval from the community. An "our school — our community" mutual support relationship should be promoted. This support will continue as long as the school is seen to provide a quality education in a safe, secure and caring environment.	

FOLLOW-UP

Staff can use the results of this safe and caring school scan to guide their efforts to provide a safe, secure and caring school environment. Each school is unique and this must be considered as the information provided by the scan is translated into action at the school level. Safe and Caring Schools: Outcomes lists corresponding outcomes related to the Safe and Caring School Scan. These outcomes provide school staff with a means to set priority areas and/or specific goals. See pages 69–70 for the outcomes.

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BOMB THREAT

ASSESS THE SITUATION

- Person receiving the threat (phone call) must gather as much information as possible relevant to location, type of bomb, when set to blow, how disguised, who is the bomber, why?
- Note every detail possible about the caller and background — sounds, gender, age, accent, emotional state, language use.
- Circumstances in the school — time, student distribution, special events, resources available.
- Communication priorities.

INTERVENTION RESPONSE

DO	DON'T
✓ Take the bomb threat seriously. ✓ Notify the police and fire department. ✓ Use a coded message to inform staff. ✓ Evacuate students using fire drill procedures. ✓ Avoid areas where the bomb is reported to be. ✓ Co-operate with the police to facilitate a search. ✓ Move to alternative accommodation as per emergency plan if necessary. ✓ Discipline perpetrators of hoaxes with serious appropriate consequences. ✓ If threat is real, prepare for media.	✗ Try to move or disarm the bomb. ✗ Touch or move any suspicious object or package. ✗ Disrupt routine more than necessary.

FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES

- Record and report as required.
- Debrief thoroughly.
- Review emergency preparedness.
- Impose appropriate consequences.
- Provide ongoing support as needed.
- Communicate with parents as appropriate.

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FIGHTS: GROUP/GANG INVOLVEMENT

ASSESS THE SITUATION

- Who is involved (how many, gang related, students or strangers)?
- Are weapons involved?
- Is there a history to the conflict (rival groups, retaliation)?
- Potential to spread to other students, other locations.
- Characteristics of combatants — age, size, gender, ethno-cultural component, gang symbols.
- Circumstances — location, time of day, audience.
- Communication priorities.

INTERVENTION RESPONSE

DO	DON'T
(if weapons) ✓ Call police. ✓ Clear the area if possible. ✓ Gather as many relevant details as possible for the police. ✓ Attempt to disperse from a distance. ✓ Identify leaders. ✓ Use a cellular phone and camera if available. ✓ Prepare for media. ✓ Access medical assistance if necessary. **(if no weapons)** ✓ Call police and alert administration. ✓ Make a loud verbal direct approach with a group of staff. ✓ Warn of police involvement. ✓ Disperse crowd and quiet agitators. ✓ Remind offenders of serious consequences. ✓ Prepare for media.	✗ Wait to take decisive action. ✗ Try to physically break up a group fight alone. ✗ Take sides. ✗ Prevent combatants from fleeing. ✗ Try to take their weapons. ✗ Try to be a hero.

FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES

- Record and report as required.
- Debrief with a view to preventing future group altercations.
- If gang related, implement a gang awareness program for staff and students.
- Impose appropriate consequences.
- Review crisis management plan.
- Provide ongoing support as needed.
- Communicate with parents as appropriate.

FIGHTS: ONE-ON-ONE

ASSESS THE SITUATION

- Who is involved (students, strangers)?
- Are weapons involved?
- Is there an obvious aggressor or is the fight consensual?
- Characteristics of combatants — age, size, gender, history, anxiety level, known students.
- Circumstances — location, timing, audience, other staff availability.
- Is there a history to this conflict?

INTERVENTION RESPONSE

DO	DON'T
(if weapons) ✓ Call the police and ensure safety of other students and staff. ✓ Use coded message to secure school. ✓ Keep your distance but give a clear directive to "stop fighting" and "put your weapons down." ✓ Tell them the police have been called. ✓ Let one or both leave. ✓ Call an ambulance if there are injuries. ✓ Prepare for media. **(if no weapons)** ✓ Approach overtly and tell them to "stop fighting otherwise you will call the police." ✓ Identify yourself and use names if possible. ✓ Summon assistance of additional staff. ✓ Disperse the audience. ✓ Call the police if necessary. ✓ Get medical attention if there are injuries.	✗ Try to restrain unless age and size of combatants permit direct intervention at low risk. ✗ Use students to physically break it up. ✗ Let them "fight it out." ✗ Prevent one or both from fleeing unless they are very young. ✗ Try to be a hero.

FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES

- Record and report as required.
- Debrief all who were involved, including witnesses.
- Consider possible future retaliations or conflicts re: prevention.
- Impose appropriate consequences.
- Review crisis management plan.
- Provide ongoing support as needed.
- Communicate with parents as appropriate.

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HOSTAGE TAKING

ASSESS THE SITUATION

- Gather the facts quickly and confirm them if possible.
- Assess the immediate danger to the hostage.
- Gather as much information on the perpetrator and hostage as possible.
- Assess the threat to others — weapons, explosives, etc.
- Prepare to accommodate outside emergency response personnel.
- Communication priorities.

INTERVENTION RESPONSE

DO	DON'T
✓ Call the police.	✗ Try to rescue the hostages.
✓ Provide as much relevant information as possible.	✗ Threaten the perpetrator.
✓ Provide appropriate facilities for emergency personnel.	✗ Hurry the situation.
✓ Co-ordinate all communications with police.	✗ Try to be a hero.
✓ Prevent upset parents, staff, students, etc. from aggravating the situation.	
✓ Prepare for the "long haul."	

FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES

- Access professional counselling and support for the hostage.
- Provide ongoing support and services to others affected.
- Debrief entire incident.
- Review crisis management plan.
- Bring closure — using the media if appropriate.
- Communicate with parents as appropriate.

HOSTILE GROUPS/GANGS

ASSESS THE SITUATION

- Who is involved (students, outside intruders, gang members)?
- Characteristics of offenders — gang symbols, age, gender, ethno-cultural component, size, history.
- Presence or absence of weapons —what kind of weapons if any?
- Where is the aggression directed (school officials, other students, outsiders, property rather than people)?
- Who are the leaders?
- Immediate dangers — what kind and to whom?
- How best to get the assistance needed.
- Communication priorities.

INTERVENTION RESPONSE

DO	DON'T
✓ Call for in-school assistance and emergency services if necessary. ✓ Call police if weapons are present. ✓ Clear the area of as many people as possible. ✓ Implement crisis management communication plan. ✓ Remind everyone of possible legal ramifications (objective statement). ✓ Forestall violence if possible. ✓ Realize the potential for group violence to expand quickly. ✓ Use coded messages to secure the school and other students if necessary. ✓ Allow offenders to leave if they try.	✗ Deal with hostile groups alone. ✗ Underestimate the seriousness of group aggression. ✗ Take sides. ✗ Confront directly either physically or verbally. ✗ Try to restrain or detain any of the offenders. ✗ Cut off exists or escape routes — let them leave. ✗ Stand together as a group of staff — spread out. ✗ Try to be a hero.

FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES

- Record and report incident in detail.
- Review process with any outside group that assisted.
- Debrief everyone involved.
- Review crisis management plan.
- Evaluate communication processes.
- Provide ongoing support as needed.
- Review implications of youth gangs if they are a problem.
- Communicate with parents as appropriate.

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HOSTILE INDIVIDUAL

ASSESS THE SITUATION

- Who is involved (student, parent, stranger, supporters)?
- Characteristics of offender — age, gender, size, history, appearance.
- What stage of the anger cycle is the offender at (anxious, verbally hostile, physically threatening, violent, recovery)?
- Presence of weapons — what kind of weapon if any.
- Reactions of other bystanders.
- Circumstances — location, timing, escape routes, dangerous equipment, communication systems.
- Accessibility of support — for intervenor, for offender.
- Extent of danger to intervenor, offender, others.
- Assess your own psychological, emotional and physical state.

INTERVENTION RESPONSE

DO	DON'T
✓ Remain calm, appear to be in control.	✗ Match anger with anger.
✓ Take steps to protect other students.	✗ Confront directly either physically or verbally.
✓ Show empathy — listen and understand.	✗ Appear threatening or punitive.
✓ Be sincere and professional.	✗ Hurry the situation — recovery takes time.
✓ Use assertive (directive) language.	✗ Remain alone if help can be accessed.
✓ State clearly expectations and consequences.	✗ Physically detain offender if he or she tries to leave.
✓ Call the offender by name if possible.	✗ Try to be a hero.
✓ Summon assistance if required.	
✓ Be aware of surroundings, including other people.	
✓ Allow the anger to subside — no one can remain violently angry for long.	

FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES

- Report and record incident in detail.
- Impose appropriate consequences.
- Debrief everyone involved.
- Modify response plan if necessary.
- Review communication process.
- Provide ongoing support as needed.

INTRUDERS/UNWELCOME VISITORS

ASSESS THE SITUATION

- What is the nature of the intrusion?
- Anxiety level of the intruder.
- Number of people involved.
- Characteristics of the intruder — age, gender, size, appearance, known history, etc.
- Presence or absence of weapons — what kind if any?
- Communication priorities.

INTERVENTION RESPONSE

DO	DON'T
✓ Approach initially with a customer-service focus unless there is a weapon or an obvious hostile attitude. ✓ Ask who they are and who they wish to see. ✓ Invite them to the general office and accompany them there or off the school grounds if they choose to leave. ✓ Implement immediate security using coded message if weapon is present or suspected. ✓ Remind unarmed non-compliant intruders that they are violating the law (*School Act,* section 21) and should leave the school. ✓ Access assistance at the first sign of resistance or hostility. ✓ Call police if possible involvement of weapons.	✗ Ignore unknown visitors or assume they have legitimate business in the school. ✗ Let visitors move unescorted through the school. ✗ Deal with hostile intruders alone. ✗ Detain or restrain them if they try to leave. ✗ Hesitate to walk away if your safety is threatened, so you can implement the emergency response plan.

FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES

- Record and report as required.
- Inform the police of the incident if they weren't involved.
- Review school access and security arrangements.
- Review crisis management plan.
- Debrief everyone involved.
- Provide ongoing support as needed.

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MURDER/ATTEMPTED MURDER

ASSESS THE SITUATION

- Identify victim, perpetrator, witnesses.
- Identify weapon used.
- Ongoing threat to others.
- Circumstances: location, time of day, audience.
- Necessary arrangements for press, parents, etc.
- Communication priorities.
- Support agencies and services required.

INTERVENTION RESPONSE

DO	DON'T
✓ Assume the perpetrator is extremely dangerous to others. ✓ Call the police, ambulance and other emergency response agencies as required. ✓ Protect students and staff. ✓ Allow the perpetrator to leave. ✓ Prepare for concerned parents, etc. ✓ Prepare for media. ✓ Leave criminal investigations up to the police.	✗ Disturb the crime scene. ✗ Touch any weapon. ✗ Confront the perpetrator directly. ✗ Cut off exit or pursue the perpetrator. ✗ Investigate any criminal behaviour. ✗ Try to be a hero. ✗ Release names of victim, perpetrator or other information — let the police inform relevant others.

FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES

- Co-operate fully with ongoing investigation.
- Debrief everyone involved.
- Prepare reports and records as required.
- Review and revise crisis management and crisis communications plans.
- Publicize the school's actions taken to restore and ensure a safe, secure and caring environment.
- Provide ongoing support as needed.
- Communicate with parents as appropriate.

NATURAL DISASTERS
(Tornado/Earthquake/Blizzard)

ASSESS THE SITUATION

- Gather the facts quickly.
- Review the school board and school disaster plans.
- Determine how communications will best be handled with students, staff, parents, public and media.
- Review the authority structure for emergencies, and the role of the school and staff in the total community response plan.
- Response to media must be considered.

INTERVENTION RESPONSE

DO	DON'T
✓ Activate the school disaster plan as needed. ✓ Contact municipal emergency services. ✓ Keep everyone indoors until advised otherwise. ✓ Make the school available for emergency use as required. ✓ Have available a battery operated radio, flashlight, telephone and megaphone (two-way radio is possible). ✓ Consider students' safety and welfare first. ✓ Work with the media and authorities to ensure accurate information is released. ✓ Provide security for school records, equipment and facilities. ✓ Be prepared to provide leadership.	✗ Panic — remain calm and in control. ✗ Guess as to the amount of damage or injuries or deaths — await accurate information. ✗ Allow anyone to disrupt emergency measures operations. ✗ Release specific information unless authorized.

FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES

- Record and report as required.
- Debrief everyone involved.
- Review school's and community's emergency response plans.
- Provide ongoing support as needed.
- Assist in the longer term disaster relief efforts as appropriate.

OTHER CRIMINAL BEHAVIOUR AND/OR ACTIVITIES

ASSESS THE SITUATION

- Nature of the criminal activity — extortion, extensive vandalism, criminal harassment, robbery, drug possession and/or trafficking, sexual assaults, hate crimes, pornography and/or procuring prostitution.
- Prepare relevant information on offenders, victims, witnesses for police.
- Don't get involved as an "agent of the police" unless specifically assigned or directed to do so.

INTERVENTION RESPONSE

DO	DON'T
✓ Call police. ✓ Turn over all relevant information and materials to police. ✓ Move to protect victims and witnesses. ✓ Restrain, detain or arrest (citizen's arrest) perpetrators only if absolutely necessary to protect people or property. ✓ Co-operate fully with the investigating officers. ✓ Secure facilities, records and equipment as required. ✓ Co-operate with media and community agencies.	✗ Investigate the crime. ✗ Pursue the criminals. ✗ Move to detain, restrain or arrest offenders unless absolutely necessary. ✗ Risk your own or others' safety. ✗ Disturb the crime scene.

FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES

- Record and report as required.
- Serve as witness and provide evidence during criminal proceedings as required.
- Publicize outcomes to demonstrate concern and vigilance of the school.
- Ensure ongoing support for and protection of victims, witnesses and others as needed.
- Review crisis management plan.
- Communicate with parents as appropriate.

SERIOUS ACCIDENTS: SUDDEN DEATH

ASSESS THE SITUATION

- Gather accurate facts quickly and get information updates frequently.
- Determine which emergency response agencies must be accessed; e.g., hazardous chemical spills, mass transportation accident, etc.
- Is assistance from outside the community required and how will it be accessed?
- What are appropriate communications in this specific situation?
- Response co-ordination and leadership.
- Consider the media — how and where to accommodate and respond to them.

INTERVENTION RESPONSE

DO

- ✓ Consider student safety and welfare first.
- ✓ Co-ordinate accurate communications with staff, students, parents and media.
- ✓ Involve municipal emergency services as required.
- ✓ If there is a sudden death as a result of a school accident:
  - provide accurate information
  - allow questions, discussion, venting and grieving
  - provide counselling and support
  - closely watch over those close to victim.
- ✓ Make arrangements for handling distraught students, parents, staff etc.
- ✓ Get things back to normal as soon as reasonable.
- ✓ Prepare for media.

DON'T

- ✗ Disturb the scene of the accident.
- ✗ Panic — remain calm and in control.
- ✗ Guess as to the situation, damages, etc. Await accurate information.
- ✗ Be pressured into imprudent action.
- ✗ Give out names, etc. Let the authorities release this information.

FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES

- Record and report as required.
- Debrief thoroughly including community agencies involved.
- Provide ongoing monitoring of those close to the victim.
- Provide ongoing support as needed.
- Bring closure — using media if appropriate.
- Assure others that the school will do whatever is necessary to provide a safe, secure and caring environment.
- Review crisis management plan.
- Communicate with parents as appropriate.

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SEXUAL ASSAULT

ASSESS THE SITUATION

- Gather accurate information regarding the situation.
- Confirm the circumstances before proceeding.
- Assess the support services required to deal appropriately with assault (perpetrator, victim, witnesses).
- Determine the at-risk condition of those involved.

INTERVENTION RESPONSE

DO	DON'T
✓ Protect the victim. ✓ Call the police. ✓ Ensure the availability of necessary support services. ✓ Contact victim's parents. ✓ Co-ordinate the school's investigation with the police investigation. ✓ Co-ordinate all communications with central office, police and parents. ✓ Prepare for media. ✓ Document all responses to the incident.	✗ Leave the victim alone. ✗ Disturb the crime scene. ✗ Interfere with any criminal investigation. ✗ Minimize the seriousness of any complaint. ✗ Release names.

FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES

- Provide ongoing support for victim and witnesses.
- Obtain written statements from other students and staff directly involved in the incident (if appropriate).
- Prepare reports and ensure records are accurate.
- Impose appropriate consequences.
- Publicize the school's actions taken to ensure a safe, secure and caring environment.
- Review all procedures to focus on prevention, counselling services and crisis management.
- Co-operate with ongoing investigation and/or prosecutions.

SUICIDE: STUDENT/STAFF/PARENT

ASSESS THE SITUATION

- Gather accurate information regarding the death.
- Confirm the circumstances before proceeding.
- Assess the number and type of support services required to deal with the aftermath and ensure their availability.
- Determine the at-risk condition of those close to the victim.

INTERVENTION RESPONSE

DO	DON'T
✓ Provide accurate information to staff and students. (A written statement may be best.) ✓ Allow opportunities to discuss, question, vent and mourn. ✓ Meet separately as a staff. ✓ Meet with students in smaller groups with support personnel in attendance. ✓ Ensure support counsellors are available as required. ✓ Watch at-risk students and staff closely, intervention may be needed. ✓ Acknowledge the finality of death. ✓ Allow time for recovery.	✗ Minimize the tragedy. ✗ Glorify the deed. ✗ Romanticize the situation. ✗ Minimize the hurt and anger of others. ✗ Try to answer "why." ✗ Ignore your own needs and emotions. ✗ Rush to return to normal routines.

FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES

- Debrief everyone affected by the suicide.
- Monitor at-risk persons as appropriate.
- Provide ongoing counselling and support as required.
- Review procedures related to suicide and sudden death.
- Provide a safe, secure and caring environment for all at the school.
- Communicate with parents as appropriate.

WEAPONS POSSESSION

ASSESS THE SITUATION

- Is the weapon suspected or confirmed? What is it?
- How many individuals are involved?
- Where is the weapon and has it been used?
- Is someone injured?
- Characteristics of perpetrator — physical and emotional condition in as much detail as possible.
- Details about incident, automobile, escape, etc.
- Circumstances: location, time of day, audience
- Communication priorities.

INTERVENTION RESPONSE

DO	DON'T
✓ Assume the weapon is deadly. ✓ Assume the offender intends to use it. ✓ Call the police and the ambulance if needed. ✓ Use a coded message to secure school and students against assault — evacuation may be necessary. ✓ Isolate the offender if possible. ✓ Suggest the offender lay down the weapon and walk away from it. ✓ Wait for the police to initiate any action against offender. ✓ Gather as many details about the offender and situation as possible. ✓ Prepare for media.	✗ Confront the offender directly. ✗ Cut off exits or prevent offender from leaving. ✗ Touch any weapon left behind. ✗ Try to be a hero.

FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES

- Record and report as required.
- Consider preventative measures for the future.
- Debrief everyone involved.
- Review the crisis management plan.
- Impose appropriate consequences.
- Provide ongoing support as needed.
- Communicate with parents as appropriate.

CRISIS SITUATION

ASSESS THE SITUATION

-
-
-
-
-
-
-

INTERVENTION RESPONSE

DO	DON'T
✓	✗
✓	✗
✓	✗
✓	✗
✓	✗
✓	✗
✓	✗
✓	✗

FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES

-
-
-
-
-
-
-
-

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Appendix 3 — Crisis Reports

TELEPHONE NUMBERS

EMERGENCY CONTACTS	PHONE NUMBER
Emergency 911 (where available)	
Police – Emergency	
– Regular	
Fire	
Ambulance	
Hospital – Emergency	
– Admitting	
Kids' Help Line (24 Hours)	1–800–668–6868
Child Abuse Hotline	1–800–387–5437
Poison Centre	1–800–332–1414
School Board Emergency Operations Co-ordinator	
Superintendent	
Alberta Teachers' Association Member Services	Edmonton 1–800–232–1208 Calgary 1–800–332–1280
Alberta School Board Association Legal Services	Edmonton (780) 482–7311 Calgary (403) 291–3038
Local District Offices of:	
Municipal Emergency Response Department	
Regional Health Authority Office	
Local Mental Health Unit	
Regional Child and Family Services Authority Office	
Other:	

LOG OF EVENTS

DATE	TIME	INCIDENT	ACTION	STAFF INITIAL

Crisis Information Summary

This form can be used to record the facts related to a crisis as information becomes available.

Report written by: ______________________________

1. This is the initial report ☐ a subsequent report ☐
2. Person(s) reporting: ______________________________

   Time: ________ Date: ____________ Location: ______________

3. Nature of the crisis: ______________________________

   It is escalating ☐ defusing ☐ unchanged ☐

4. Details of what happened or is happening: ______________________________

   ____

   ____

5. What emergency assistance is needed? ______________________________

   ____

   ____

6. Other relevant information: ______________________________

   ____

   ____

7. What staff are involved? ______________________________

   ____

8. What students are involved (name, grade, homeroom)? ______________________________

   ____

   ____

9. Are outsiders and/or strangers involved?

   Yes ☐ No ☐

   If yes, describe: (details are important) ______________________________

   ____

   ____

10. Names of witnesses: (and phone numbers, if possible) ______________________________

    ____

    ____

Post-Crisis Debriefing Report

Everyone directly involved in the crisis situation should complete this form.

Report filed by: ____________________

Date: __________ Time: ______ School: ____________________

Nature of the Crisis:

Date: __________ Time: ______ Location: ____________________

Details: ____________________

Personal Injuries: To Whom	Nature of Injury:

Emergency Services Used:	Effectiveness of the Service:

School Responses:	Effectiveness of Response:

Communications Used:	Effectiveness of Communication:

Major Concerns or Problems:

____

Positive Actions and Effective Responses:

____

Post-Crisis Information Release

This form could be used to communicate the facts of a crisis situation and the ongoing responses of the school to parents and/or the media.

On ______________ at ____________________________ the following crisis situation occurred.
(date) (school)

____

____

____

____

____

____

____

____

____

The staff feel ____

____ that this has happened.

We appreciated the co-operation and assistance of ____________________________

____

We will be (describe follow-up responses and plans) __________________________

____

____

____

____

____

____

Give specific information to restore confidence, dispel rumours, reinforce the school's plans and responses, and invite further communications.

Please call ______________________________ **at** ______________________________ **if**
(name) (number)

you require additional information about this situation.

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Plan of Action Summary

Crisis management team members should individually complete this form based upon debriefing input. Once completed, the team should meet and take action based upon feedback.

1. Respondent: ______________________
2. Role during the crisis: ______________________
3. Description of the incident: ______________________
4. Effective responses: ______________________
5. Ineffective responses: ______________________
6. Assignment of responsibilities. What worked? ______________________
7. Recommended changes to plans: ______________________
8. Suggested Feedback to:

   a) staff: ______________________

   b) others: ______________________

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Evaluation and Feedback

Supporting Safe, Secure and Caring Schools in Alberta is intended to assist you in your efforts to ensure your school provides a safe and caring teaching and learning environment. Since you are in the best position to identify the strengths and weaknesses, please share your thoughts with us on the value of this resource. Please fax your feedback to the Special Education Branch, Alberta Learning.

Tell Us What You Think

	Yes	No	Comments
Useful?	☐	☐	________________
Easy to understand?	☐	☐	________________
Well-organized?	☐	☐	________________
Complete?	☐	☐	________________

Overall Rating	5 (Excellent)	4	3	2	1 (Poor)

Other comments: ________________

Your name (if you wish): ________________

Phone number: ________________

Please return to: Special Education Branch, Alberta Learning
10th Floor, East Devonian Building
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Edmonton, AB T5K 0L2
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